

**Venice Carnival: the festivities will kick off on Saturday, February 4 with the Opening Parade along the Grand Canal. The 2023 edition will end on Tuesday, February 21 and will have as its theme symbols, from the Zodiac to the four natural elements. Mayor Brugnaro: “This Carnival will be widespread all over the city, respectful and able to entertain all those who will participate”**

From the signs of the Zodiac to the symbols of earth, water, fire and air, searching for the origin of one's own sign, in order to unleash our creativity and essence. “Take your Time for the Original Signs” is the theme chosen for the Venice Carnival 2023.

*Venice, 26 January 2023* – Born under the sign of the Lion of St. Mark, this year's edition will begin on **Saturday, February 4** with the **Opening Parade "Original Dreamers"** along the Grand Canal and will end on **Shrove Tuesday (21 February 2023)**, proposing a mix of events able to involve all age groups and encourage Venetians and guests to dress up.

The Venice Carnival 2023 is promoted by the City of Venice and organised by the participated company Vela spa. Once again, it sees the signature of the Artistic Director and Stage Designer of La Fenice Theatre **Massimo Checchetto**. The presentation of the official programme and side initiatives took place this morning at the municipal headquarters of Ca' Farsetti, in the presence of **Simone Venturini, Councillor for Tourism, Paola Mar, Councillor for the Promotion of the Territory, Giovanni Giusto, Delegate for the Protection of Traditions, Carnival Artistic Director Massimo Checchetto, Vela spa's Sole Director Piero Rosa Salva, and Vela spa's Operations Manager Fabrizio D'Oria.**

“The Carnival of Venice for me is the most beautiful in the world, it takes place in an extraordinary city. During this period of time, we usually turn to children because it is mainly their party. But this year's celebrations will also be for adults – **explained Mayor Luigi Brugnaro** – . The idea of distributing the various events in time and space will



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allow us to reach all the citizens of the historic centre, the mainland and the islands. It will also be a very social event that can be experienced through the web and smartphones. We want it to be a Carnival that is widespread and respectful of the city and that, above all, entertains those who participate. It will not only revolve around having fun, but also around culture with the Civic Museums, music for young people and other initiatives, and finally the float parades, with a nice prologue in Dese already scheduled for this Sunday, and the novelty of the floats in Mestre! Once the Carnival is over – **concluded the Mayor of Venice** – we will launch a contest to design a float and a boat to be paraded in the next edition. We will finance the construction and they will thus become “official” elements of the event. We hope that the Carnival will be a time to regain a smile on our face and a bit of irony, as suggested by the meaning of the title of this edition: to find ourselves in our sign”.

“The mission of this edition is to search within oneself for one's original sign. **“Take your time for the Original Signs”** is an invitation – **said Checchetto**. – It is an opportunity to get lost in the shows, in the campi and calli of Venice and in the streets and squares of the mainland. I ask all those who choose Venice to dress up because it is the best way to experience the festival. It is the Carnival born under the sign of the Lion, the sign of St. Mark, born under the banner of free expression, creative energy, the Zodiac, fantastic worlds, mythical animals, and heroes for those who want to dream again through the signs of originality with lightness and invention. We are waiting for everyone in Venice to find their own essence and uniqueness within themselves”.

The programme will have a single common denominator: moving from the origins to originality and expressing the unique and unrepeatable self through music, shows, entertainment and magic all over the Venetian campi and calli, the islands, in the streets and squares of Mestre and the mainland municipalities.

“Confirming the idea of Mayor Luigi Brugnaro, the Carnival of Venice this year will reach all the city's municipalities and districts with widespread performances and high quality events that will appeal to local families and visitors who wish to immerse themselves in the unique atmosphere that only our city can offer – **explained in his speech Simone Venturini, Councillor for Tourism**. – The invitation for this event, which is one of the highlights of the year and which projects the name of Venice throughout the world, is to take your time, to stay for several days, in order to participate in a celebration that has so much to offer, both from the cultural and entertainment points of view. Thanks to these weeks of programming, we will send out a message whose echo will continue to develop in the months to come, once again placing our city at the centre of world media attention”.

The opening weekend includes two major events on the Grand Canal: **the Opening Parade “Original Dreamers”**, on Saturday, February 4 at 8 PM, and the **rowing boat parade** accompanying the picturesque “Pantegana” boat, on Sunday, February 5 at 11 AM.

Thanks to the presence of artists, colours, plays of light and music, **“Original Dreamers”** will stage all the symbols linked to the traditions of the Venetian Carnival, giving life to a highly evocative water route, from the area in front of Santa Lucia Railway Station to Bacino San Marco, that will be brightened up by the participation of Alice Bars, winner of the 2022 Marie Competition.

In collaboration with the **Coordinamento Associazioni Remiere di Voga alla Veneta, on Sunday, February 5** about a hundred rowing boats will gather in the Grand Canal, filling it with colours, decorations and masks. The water parade will set off from Punta della Dogana to arrive at Rialto, captained by a *caorlina* boat carrying the papier-mâché “Pantegana”, one of the symbols of the people’s Carnival, ready to burst out in front of the Rialto Bridge in a blaze of confetti and streamers, thus symbolically kicking off the celebrations for Carnival 2023.

“Venice has been celebrating the Carnival for almost a thousand years. The term “Carnival”, in fact, appears for the first time in 1094 at the time of Doge Vitale Falier, while the declaration of a real “Venexia” celebration called Carnival dates back to 1296 by the Senate of the Serenissima – **is the comment of Giovanni Giusto, the Councillor delegated to the Protection of Traditions** – That history continues to this day with masked people that casually wander through the campi and calli, or that climb aboard decorated boats moving between the canals. And then events and festivities spread throughout the campi: the “Scaletieri” who bake the sweets typical of the history of the Venetian Carnival; the craftsmen who take the front row to tell of their craft and heritage. The Carnival is, therefore, a great tradition that continues – **Giusto added** – but it is also magic, and that is why the prelude to the 2023 Carnival is entrusted to tradition with the masked water parade that starts from St. Mark’s Basin and arrives at Erbaria in Rialto, to celebrate the great feast of Venetians and Venetians around the world, in the very place where Venice is said to have been born more than 1600 years ago. There will also be the Festa delle Marie, whose story, reinterpreted in a contemporary key by Bruno Tosi, tells of Venice and of the abduction of twelve maidens later brought back by the ‘triumphant’ Venetians to the lagoon. Thanks to tradition, our story continues”.

The first weekend of February will also see the beginning of the **Venice Carnival Street Show**, a series of events spread across the main squares of Venice and Mestre where street art will triumph with performances by actors, equilibrists, magicians, musicians and

illusionists. The Carnival Street Show performances will be **repeated the following weekend (Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 February) and on the days of the "fat" week from Thursday, February 16 to Tuesday, February 21.**

"Masked and colourful allegorical floats, as tradition dictates, which were suspended during the pandemic period and which today we strongly want to bring back to the streets so as not to lose popular customs. The 2023 Carnival will be a Carnival that focuses once again on the involvement of the municipalities and citizens, responding to the input of our Mayor Brugnaro and the idea of thinking of Venice as the ensemble of several cities – **added Paola Mar, councillor for the promotion of the territory.** – On the mainland and on the islands, everyone will be able to participate and become a protagonist in the parades of floats, with masks and lots of fun for everyone, especially the children, who for us always come first. This year we have also decided to add a new one through the streets of the centre of Mestre, with an unprecedented route from Via Piave to Via San Pio X".

Furthermore, for **"Take your Time for the Original Signs"** there will be the awaited return of the parades of large **parade floats**, following the best carnival tradition. The events are scheduled at **Lido, Pellestrina, Burano, Marghera, Campalto, Zelarino** and, new for 2023, also in the centre of **Mestre**. The calendar of float parades will kick off on **Thursday, February 16 at Pellestrina, and it will be followed on Friday 17 at Lido, on Saturday 18 at Marghera and Burano, on Sunday 19 at Campalto and Burano, on Monday 20 at Mestre, on Tuesday 21 at Zelarino and again at Burano.**

After the successful first edition in 2022, the **Tese of the Venice Arsenale** will host once again an extraordinary performance of dance, music and special effects, created for the Venice Carnival 2023, and cradled by the main element of Venice: water. **The show "Original Signs"** will be a magical parade that transforms the watery space of the Arsenale basin into an evocative and surreal atmosphere.

Eight tableaux vivants staged by a spectacular international artistic cast will tell the story of man's evolution and his continuous communicative research. From the body that speaks to the ancestral signs of nature, from the need for contact with the transcendental and its celestial symbols to the need to express oneself with the signs of Art in an explosion of colour. A show about water whose creative energy unleashes the symbols of earth, water, air, fire. A journey on the edge between the origins to the authentic.

The programme includes performances **from Friday 10 to Sunday 12 and from Thursday 16 to Tuesday 21 February, with two replicas per day, one at 6.30 PM and one at 9 PM.** It is a paying-ticket event that can be booked online through the Vivaticket

circuit or at Vela/Venezia Unica Sales Points. All spectators will have a reserved seat to enjoy the 30-minute performance at its best. **Residents of the City of Venice will be entitled to free admission exclusively in the dedicated grandstand sectors (until all available seats are sold out)** and to reduced rates in the other sectors. For more information, we suggest to visit the official Venice Carnival website.

Moreover, the **Venice Arsenal** will once again be the location for **dancing. On Saturday, February 11 and from Friday 17 to Tuesday, February 21**, inside the Tese di San Cristoforo, dance music will be the protagonist of the evenings of the **“Arsenale Carnival Experience”** in a three-pavilions area set up and equipped to entertain young and old of all nationalities.

“Under the instructions of the municipal administration and Mayor Brugnaro, we have followed this organisational line of the Carnival, which already proved to be positive last year – **said Rosa Salva**. – Four are the key words for the 2023 edition: fun, elegance, sustainability and safety. The Carnival is a complex event that finds a lot of support, so we thank the sponsors, the companies, the workers, and all the professionals who, in various ways, contribute to the success of a pleasant and safe event”.

Another important appointment will be the traditional **Contest of the 12 Marie**. Conceived and re-launched in 1999 by **Bruno Tosi**, it re-enacts in a modern key the abduction and release of twelve betrothed brides at the time of Doge Pietro Candiano III (1039). Bruno Tosi, a well-known Italian film director and cultural operator who passed away in 2012, relaunched this wonderful tradition in Venice after centuries of neglect. Today, it is carried on by the “god-mother” of the 12 Marie, **Maria Grazia Bortolato**.

**All girls born or resident in the 44 municipalities of the Metropolitan City of Venice between the ages of 18 and 28** can aspire to become one of the **12 Marie of the Venice Carnival 2023**. They will be selected by a commission on **Friday, February 3** in the halls of the Scuola Grande San Giovanni Evangelista; they will then become the protagonists of a journey back in time and will participate in many activities up to the procession on the Grand Canal, in a gondola, and the **crowning of the Maria dell’anno (Mary of the Year), which will take place on Monday, February 20 in the Sale Apollinee of La Fenice Theatre**, taking the sceptre from the Maria of 2022 Alice Bars. Starting with the water parade on the Grand Canal on Saturday, February 11, there will be many events featuring the 12 Marie.

This edition will also feature the **Most Beautiful Mask Contest in St. Mark’s Square and the Most Beautiful Mask Contest in Piazza Ferretto**. The heart of Venice and of Mestre will see the presence of twin mobile structures that will welcome all those masks

that wish to participate in the competition and immortalise their image in the 360° photographic set.

In addition, this year marks the return of the Commedia dell'Arte in **St. Mark's Square and Campo Santo Stefano** with **"Venezia, ovvero l'arte della commedia"** ("Venice, or the art of comedy"), a series of theatre shows **curated by the Venetian Theatre Company "Pantakin"**, which will consist of more than **70 performances throughout the Carnival period starting on 4 February**.

And if the Venice Carnival is a surreal game that opens up the mind and unexpected scenarios, **"Original Sinners", the Carnival's official Dinner Show at Ca' Vendramin Calergi**, promises an introspective journey of sensuality and transgression. Amidst sumptuous dresses and unforgettable artistic performances, the "sinners" will meet in the magnificent rooms overlooking the Grand Canal to "disobey" at the table and, for one night, give space to their innermost desires.

The Dinner Shows are scheduled for **Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 February and 16-21 February: tickets and reservations available at <https://www.carnevale.venezia.it/en/>**

Furthermore, art and theatre return to celebrate Carnival with a programme of performances in the City's cultural venues with the tried and tested experience of the **Carnival of Culture**. Theatres and museums are gearing up to host shows, concerts, and events to satisfy even the most discerning palates, offering a programme tailored to this year's theme. These include the extraordinary openings of the museums of the **Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia** circuit as well as the programme proposed by the **Venice Biennale** and the city theatres.

For updates and programmes consult the official website <https://www.carnevale.venezia.it/en/> and social channels: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube. The 2023 hashtag for all social network users is #CarnevaleVenezia2023.

Partners of the Venice Carnival 2023 are: Venice and Rovigo Chamber of Commerce, Lavazza, Consorzio di tutela della DOC Prosecco, American Express, Aperol.

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