

Dorsoduro Offers a Less Touristy—but Equally Refined—Taste of Venice

Investment properties pay off in this district that's separated from St. Mark's by the Grand Canal

BY CLAIRE CARPONEN ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON NOVEMBER 05, 2016 | [MANSION GLOBAL](#) |



Dorsoduro, one of the six districts of Venice, is home to some of the best canals, palaces and art galleries in the city.

WESTEND61 / GETTY IMAGES

Neighborhood Notes



Known for its art galleries, gothic churches and picturesque canals and palaces, Venice's Dorsoduro is refined and rich in culture. Separated from the district of St. Mark's—the city's beating heart—by the Grand Canal, it is bustling but not overwhelming, and offers some of the most iconic views of the city.

Boundaries

Dorsoduro, one of the six districts of Venice, is located in the southern part of the city. Shaped like a peninsula, it is surrounded by the Grand Canal, St. Mark's basin and the wide Guidecca Canal.

The southern side of the island overlooks the Guidecca Canal to the island of Guidecca. The eastern edge is by the Grand Canal and has views of St. Mark's Square. At the easternmost tip, near Santa Maria della Salute, a 17th-century domed church, it is possible to see the city's most famous establishment, Harry's Bar, on other side of the Grand Canal. The district extends to Piazzale Roma in the north.

Price range

Carlo Prandini, of Alta-Gamma, a Venice-based estate agent that works with Prestige Property Group, says that prices per square meter start from €3,000 (US\$3,265) and go up to €20,000 (US\$22,000).

Amy Redfern, of Knight Frank, gives a lower estimate: “Prices tend to range from €6,000 (US\$6,500) to €12,000 (US\$13,000) per square meter. It is possible to buy an apartment for as little as €600,000 (US\$650,000).”

MORE: [Venice Home with Gothic Façade from 15th Century Being Sold](#)

“The price depends on the history of the building and whether it has views of a canal and garden or balcony,” Ms Redfern says. “There is always demand for properties with outside space because people love the idea of owning a place with a terrace or balcony large enough for a table and chairs where they can enjoy a cup of coffee in the morning and watch the sunset with an aperitivo drink in the evening. However, properties with gardens are scarce so they come at a premium.”

Unsurprisingly, homes with views of the Grand Canal overlooking St. Mark’s Square command the highest prices. Those, Ms. Redfern says, “with views of the Grand Canal cost between €12,000 and €15,000 (US\$13,300 and US\$16,600) per square meter. The ceiling price for a whole palazzi in the district is €14 to €15 million (US\$15-\$16 million).”

Housing stock

Mainly historic 17th and 18th century palazzi (palaces) that have been converted into apartments. It is not easy to find a whole palazzo because they are rare and often sold off market.



An apartment overlooking a pretty canal in the heart of the Dorsoduro area is currently on the market.
VENICE SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

What makes it unique:

It's historic, refined and authentically Venetian. It is home to some of the best canals, palaces and art galleries in the city, such as the Gallerie dell'Accademia, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection and Punta Della Dogana.

A short walk from St. Mark's district via the Accademia Bridge over the Grand Canal, Dorsoduro is also distinctively less touristy than other neighbouring districts.

It has a vibrant market square, Camp Santa Margherita, which is lined with bars, such as Il Caffè Rosso, a small historic cafe with a lively vibe that serve tramezzino (small crustless sandwiches) with their spritz, as well as restaurants and gelaterias. It also hosts a daily fresh produce and fish market and a flower market on Saturdays. The hub of the neighborhood, the square get busy in the evenings, but you can easily escape the crowds by heading down one of its side streets.

MORE: [Foreign Buyers Boost Italian Home Sales](#)

Clustered in and around Camp Santa Margherita are the neighborhood's bacari, wine bars that serve drinks with small snacks known as cicchetti. The most well known cicchetti dish is baccalà mantecato: slices of bread or grilled polenta topped with whipped salted cod. The bacari in Dorsoduro are said to be the best in the city.



This three-floor apartment in the heart of the Dorsoduro area comes with a roof terrace with canal views.
VENICE SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

A fascinating sight in the neighborhood is Squero di San Trovaso, a boatyard complex that builds gondolas. Dorsoduro is also home to beautiful churches, such as the Santa Maria della Salute and San Sebastiano, a 16th-century church that houses a series of paintings and frescos by Paolo Veronese.

Home to art colleges and a university, the neighbourhood has a large student population, which adds to its laid-back, youthful and lively feel.

Luxe amenities in the neighbourhood

Venetia Studium, a lighting and furnishings company that stocks Fortuny lamps as well as soft furnishings such as cushions, tapestries, table runners and curtains, has a store in the neighborhood. Linea d'Ombra, a restaurant with a terrace overlooking the Grand Canal, is well regarded. II Bottegone da Schiavi is said to be the best cicchetti bar in the district.

Who lives there?

Lots of families and retirement-aged couples reside in the area. “It attracts a lot of Americans, Brits and British expats who have been living in Hong Kong and Singapore for 15 to 20 years and who want a place where they can live for part of the year and rent out,” Ms. Redfern says.

“It also attracts northern Europeans, particularly Norwegians, Germans and Scandinavians,” she said. The community is not purely international though—there is a large local population.“

MORE: [Medieval Italian Castle with 80-Plus Rooms Going on the Auction Block](#)

Notable residents

The Cipriani family, who started the world-famous Harry's Bar and founded the Hotel Cipriani, live here.

Outlook

"Supply is limited and demand is increasing. An interesting property could sell within days," Mr. Prandini says.

Ms. Redfern agrees: "Exceptional homes tend to sell quickly. Venice has enduring appeal and even though prices are not back to their peak in 2008, the market is strong. Homes tend to sell 10% to 15% below their asking price."

She adds: "You can expect a good rental return nearly all year round. We are selling a two-bedroom apartment that has an annual rental income of €70,000 (US \$76,000)."