



## St. Mark's Square and its treasures

**1 Saint Mark's Basilica** is the first church dedicated to the Patron Saint, whose name it bears and whose relics are enshrined within, having been smuggled out of Alexandria by two Venetian merchants and brought undercover to the city. The church was erected in the year 820 at the behest of Giustiniano Partecipazio, 11th Doge of Venice. Its magnificence makes it Venice's most important church and the historical and artistic symbol of the city.

**2** At 98.6 metres tall, **Saint Mark's Bell Tower** is one of the tallest in Italy; it is affectionately known as "Paròn de casa" or "Lord of the house" by the Venetians, who saw it collapse completely on 14th July 1902, only to be newly opened in 1912. Hence the motto inscribed on the right-hand side of the tower: "Come era, dove era" "As it was, where it was", a phrase spoken by mayor Filippo Grimani upon the laying of the first stone on 25th April 1903.

**3 St Mark's Clocktower**, with its gold and blue enamelled face, marks the hour, day, phase of the moon and sign of the zodiac. Built between 1496 and 1499 by architect Mauro Codussi, the tower is topped by the famous "Moors of Venice", two statues which are very similar but not identical, as one is lacking a beard. The latter is known as the "young" while the former is the "old", and they mark the hours by striking the bell with their hammers in a very precise manner: the Old Moor strikes two minutes before the hour, representing time past, and the Young Moor strikes two minutes later, representing time to come.

### **4 The Procuratie Vecchie and Procuratie Nuove;**

### **the Palazzo Reale - today's Museo Correr:**

the Procuratie occupy the two parallel sides of the square, two magnificent buildings rebuilt in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which were once the seats of the highest dignitaries in Venice: the procurators. At the far end of the square stood the Church of San Gimignano, demolished by Napoleon to make way for the Procuratie Nuovissime, with its sumptuous salons. During the Kingdom of Italy (1805-1814), the Procuratie Nuove buildings were used as a Royal Palace, a function that continued under the Savoy from 1866 to 1946. Today the Procuratie Nuove and Nuovissime house the Museo Correr, where visitors can learn about the Venetian way of life through sculpture, paintings, libraries etc. Here you can discover the secrets of Venice's naval might through descriptions of the Arsenale where the celebrated Galleys were built, and you'll also have the opportunity to visit the rooms of the Royal Palace, refurbished for Empress Elisabeth of Austria.

**The entry ticket to the Doge's Palace allows you to discover this section of Saint Mark's Square, and access the Museo Correr during opening times.**

**5 Doge's Palace and Bridge of Sighs:** The Doge's Palace, once the seat of the Doge and the courts, was founded after 812 in the monumental zone of Piazza San Marco. It is a masterpiece with a distinctive style inspired by Byzantine and Oriental architecture, epitomising the strength of the trading and cultural relations between la Serenissima and the East. The Doge's Palace and the New Prison are connected via a double passageway over one of Venice's most famous bridges: the Bridge of Sighs, so called because legend tells that in the days of the Republic, prisoners crossing the bridge would sigh at the prospect of seeing Venice for the last time.

