



# THE WAYFARER

*By Dawn M. Wayand*

## The Sound of Venice



On my last trip to Europe, I treated myself to a concert while in Venice. From what I have gathered in my travels to date, Venice (located in Italy) and Vienna (located in Austria) are noted for their musical arts. Vivaldi was born and died in Venice. He played in Venice, Vienna and Prague. Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria, and played all over Europe, including Venice. He died in Vienna.

The concert I attended was located near the Piazza San Marco and was called the "Omaggio a Tribute to Antonio Vivaldi". The cost was 25€ (approximately 32 USD). It took place in a music hall with a small stage and many rows of wooden fold-up chairs. The seats were not elevated, so if you chose to sit in the back, your view was obstructed by the people sitting in front of you. Even knowing this, I took a seat in the back, hoping to be able to uninterruptedly stand up and take pictures during the concert, which was allowed as long as you didn't shoot using flash.

I'm not sure if it was fortunate or unfortunate that I ended up not taking any pictures during the concert. Instead, I found myself strapped to the seat mesmerized by the melody of the performance. The main part of the concert was played by six musicians of the San Marco Chamber Orchestra. The concert was composed of a cast of first and second violinists, a viola player, a cellist (who also doubled as a mandolin player) and an organist. About halfway through the hour-long concert, the violin soloist, Carlos Garfias, made his debut to a standing ovation audience. Unlike the rest of the orchestra who remained seated, the soloist stood and enthusiastically played Vivaldi's "Four Seasons." A few of the pieces were popular sounds that I had heard previously but the entire performance was spectacular in general.



At the end of the concert, people remained seated and clapped very loudly. I thought it was odd because in America we tend to stand when we clap at the end of a performance. The soloist left the stage after a bow of his head and the people continued to clap for a long time.

after he left. He then reappeared five minutes later for an encore piece lasting about ten minutes before the concert concluded and all musicians left the stage.



Venice is small with very little to see after dark. The Rialto Bridge is lit up with tourist shops, and San Marco Square is abundant in alluring Italian restaurants, but don't miss out on the entertainment of a concert. You will find that the relaxing sounds of Venice does include more than just the water.

### Eats Pick

The very first thing I liked about Ai Leoncini was the presentation of the meats, fish and other fresh ingredients displayed in a case where the kitchen sat (located to the mid-right of the restaurant). The waiters' uniforms - suits of bright cornflower blue with white-collared shirts underneath - matched the plaid tablecloths on the tables all over the restaurant.

I began my meal with a carafe of 2002 Villachigi Chianti - Chianti being my favorite type of red wine. For dinner, I ordered Gnocchi with a thick, creamy gorgonzola cheese sauce. If you like a nice sharp white cheese and potato pasta, this dish is to die for. My total bill with wine, dinner and a cappuccino following the meal was 26€ with the included 12% gratuity. Pending your opinion of the food and service, you can leave more. I usually try to even it up to 20% when everything is perfect.

If you're up for a great lunch or dinner near San Marco Square, which is the main square in Venice, Ai Leoncini is high on my list of recommendations.

#### **Ai Leoncini**

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