

STUDY TOURS

VENICE & FLORENCE

A successful study tour to Venice organised this year by the University of Malta aimed to familiarise students of architecture and Baroque studies with the unique architectural and urban space qualities of Venice—seen in the splendid and colourful architecture mirrored in the waters of the Grand Canal, in the concentration of magnificent churches and palaces expressing the spirit of Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Europe, and the paintings of Tintoretto, Titian, Veronese and Tiepolo. Of particular interest to the students was the unusual system of foundation building using an impermeable stone supported on larchwood planks and timber piles sunk deep into the Caranto bedrock of sand and clay below water level.

Study tours provide a valuable opportunity for students to observe different concepts of spatial organisation, architectural beauty, and innovative building techniques. Architect Shirley Cefai was responsible for the excellent organisation and success of the trip, which was based on her first hand experience of the city when studying there. The 126 students went around Venice following an interesting and varied itinerary. Among the many places they visited were the Piazza and Basilica of S. Marco, the churches and environs of S. Zaccaria, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, S. Maria dei Miracoli and S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, the Rialto bridge, and the new and old Ghetto areas in Canneregio. The tour also included a traghetto trip on the famous Grand Canal, and visits to the magnificent Baroque and Gothic churches of the Scalzi and Madonna dell'Orto – containing the burial place and Last Judgement painting of the sixteenth-century Venetian painter Jacobo Tintoretto.

On-site lectures on the architectural and artistic history of Venice were given by Professor Denis De Lucca. At the end of this most successful tour, the students expressed their



Views of Venice by Canaletto (1697-1768) Top: Venice - The Grand Canal from the Carità towards the Bacino. Below: A Regatta on the Grand Canal. Opp: Venice - Piazza San Marco.

appreciation of this initiative, together with their wish that other similar tours will be held in the future. The tour was sponsored by Air Malta, HSBC Bank, Malta International Airport, Corinthia Group, and Master Wines.

The Department of Architecture and Urban Design and the IIBS at the University of Malta also recently organised a very rewarding study tour to Florence, thanks to substantial sponsorships from HSBC Bank, Malta International Airport, the Corinthia Group of Companies, Vassallo Builders, Go Mobile, Ballut Blocks Ltd., Hardrocks Ltd., and the Ministry of Education.

The objective of the study tour, as outlined by Professor Denis De Lucca, Head of Department, was to familiarize architecture students with the main representative buildings of Medieval and Renaissance Florence, as reflected in a series of magnificent churches and palaces, in the beautiful works of art contained in them and in a rich urban texture mirroring the social and political changes that took place in Florence since its foundation as a Roman city built by Julius Caesar to accommodate veterans of his Gallic wars.

In the introduction to the tour programme, Professor De Lucca explained that study tours form an important component of an architect's education since they give students the opportunity to experience spaces and buildings explained to them during course lectures and tutorials. In view of the fact that Renaissance architecture had a profound influence on architectural thought and practice, a visit to the Renaissance capital of Italy constitutes an important teaching and learning experience.

Arch. Shirley Cefai, lecturer in



the Department, was responsible for the organisation of the study tour to Florence and made all the necessary arrangements to ensure that all went well during the trip. Among the places visited by the 120 students who participated in the study tour were the churches of S.S. Annunziata, S. Lorenzo, S. Maria Novella, S. Spirito, S. Croce, and S. Maria del Fiore, as well as the Medici Ricciardi, Strozzi and Rucellai palaces. The highlight of the study tour was a visit to the Palazzo Vecchio in Piazza della Signoria, the political centre of Florence during the rule of the Medicis. Here students experienced the magnificence of the Sala del Cinquecento and other splendidly adorned apartments in the Palace. Explanations on the architectural and art history of Florence were given by Professor De Lucca who, together with lecturers Vincent Buhagiar, Lino Bianco, Ruben Borg and Carmel Cacopardo, accompanied the students to Florence. The study tour was concluded with a visit to the Piazza dei Miracoli in the historic centre of Pisa.



STUDY TOUR

BAROQUE NOTO



Noto. Churches of S.S. Salvatore and S. Chiara

Last March IIBS and the Department of Architecture and Urban Design (DAU) of the University of Catania once again jointly organised a study tour to the Baroque town of Noto in Sicily. Tour participants included 20 students following the Certificate in Baroque Architecture and MA in Baroque Studies courses currently run by the Institute.

The group visited various buildings, including the Cathedral - now being restored following the 1996 collapse of the dome - the churches of S. Francesco, S. Chiara, S. Carlo Borromeo and S. Domenico, as well as several palaces, collectively forming the impressive Baroque scenario of Noto as built after the earthquake of 1693.

Site lectures were delivered by Professor Denis De Lucca, Architect Hermann Bonnici, and lecturers from the University of Catania, who accompanied the students. The tour ended with a visit to the Baroque architecture of Catania concentrated in Via Etnea and Via dei Cruciferi. Here the students were given the opportunity to view the Buscoli Palace of the Princes of Paternò, which has one of the most impressive eighteenth-century interiors of Baroque Catania.

The study tour was made possible through the assistance of Arch. Vincent Cassar, Director General of the Works Division in Malta, and Professor Salvatore Barbera, DAU Director at the University of Catania.