



### *Cà d'Zan Mansion Fact Sheet*

- In 1924, construction began on the Ringling's new Sarasota home, *Cà d'Zan*, which means "House of John" in Venetian dialect. The house was completed just before Christmas 1925, at a cost of \$1.5 million and the Ringlings moved in during November of 1926.
- John Ringling's brother, Charles, occupied the neighboring estate until his death in December 1926.
- Dwight James Baum of New York was the architect and Owen Burns was the builder.
- John and Mable Ringling greatly admired the unique architectural style of the Danieli and the Bauer-Grunwald hotels, and the palaces (*palazzi* in Italian) that face the canals in Venice, Italy. The architectural style is called Venetian Gothic and greatly influenced the design of the *Cà d'Zan*.
- Mable had an oilskin portfolio filled with postcards, sketches, photos and other materials that she gathered on her travels to aid the architect with his design.
- The house is on a site 1,000 feet long (waterfront property on Sarasota Bay) and 3,000 feet deep.
- *Cà d'Zan* is a 200-foot long mansion encompassing approximately 22,000 square feet with 32 rooms and 15 bathrooms.
- The structure has four stories. The main floor includes living, entertaining and dining areas. The Ringling's private bedrooms as well as five guest rooms encompass the second floor. The third floor consists of a game room and bath, and the fourth floor is a great, beamed guest room and bath with windows on all four sides. The pinnacle of the structure is a 61-foot tower with an open-air landing and a high domed ceiling.
- *Cà d'Zan* is constructed from terra cotta "T" blocks, concrete, and brick, covered with stucco and terra cotta, and embellished with glazed tile.
- Decorative tile, medallions, balustrades, and ornamental cresting in soft red, yellow, green, blue and ivory complement the pink patina of the stucco and terra cotta exterior.
- The terra cotta molds came from the molds and kilns of Oram W. Ketchum of Pennsylvania.
- Mable personally supervised the mixing of the terra cotta and the glazing of the tiles.
- The original roof was made from 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish tiles imported by the builder Owen Burns.
- The entrance door is fashioned in a Renaissance style. The exterior is weathered walnut

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and the interior is faced with polished mahogany. A copper and wrought iron screen designed by Dwight James Baum covers the outer door.



- The Court, which was originally planned as an open court, was used as a living room by the Ringlings. It measures 50 x 65 feet with a 30-foot ceiling.
- Furnishings and decorative objects from the 17<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were installed including:
  - A dining room table that accommodates 22 chairs and 20 leaves.
  - A crystal chandelier from the original Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, which hangs in the Court above the black and white marble-tiled floor.
  - An Aeolian organ in the Court that has 2,289 pipes and was installed in a chamber hidden by tapestries on the second-floor balcony.
- The bayfront Terrace is made from domestic and imported marble; the steps are veined English marble.
- John kept his yacht, *Zalophus*, docked at the bayfront terrace. A gondola for Mable was docked at a small island (that no longer exists) just off the terrace.
- Paintings in the home are by Flemish/Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and French artists including Langetti, Sorine, Devouge, and a collaboration between Mazo and Velàzquez.
- John Ringling died in New York in December 1936. Although he willed his residence, the Museum of Art and his art collection to the State of Florida, legal battles went on for a decade until the title to the property finally passed unencumbered to the state. *Cà d'Zan* was closed during this time.
- The mansion reopened to the public December 1946.
- In 1996, the restoration and conservation project began on the exterior; the mansion was closed from January 1999 until reopening in April 2002 so that the interior renovation could be completed.

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