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JOHN AND MABLE RINGLING

John Ringling was born in McGregor, Iowa, in 1866. He was the product of humble origins but became one of the wealthiest men in America. At the root of his success was the Ringling Bros. Circus, which he founded with four of his brothers in 1884.

John married Mable Burton of Moons, Ohio, in 1905. They were, by all accounts, a happy couple with shared interests in art, culture, and travel. They made their first visit to Florida in 1909 and purchased property in Sarasota two years later.

ENGLISH

WELCOME

The Ringling celebrates the legacy of circus owner and art collector, John Ringling, and his wife, Mable. It combines outstanding art and circus museums with a historic mansion and theater, occupying beautiful grounds and gardens in Sarasota, Florida.

The Ringling was designated as the official State Art Museum of Florida in 1980 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places two years later. It has been administered by Florida State University since 2000 and is now one of the largest university arts centers in the United States.



MUSEUM OF ART



The Museum of Art opened in the early 1930s to display an outstanding collection of European paintings and decorative arts from the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. To this has been added an important collection of modern and contemporary art from Europe and America, including photographs and other works on paper. Rotations of works from this collection are presented, along with temporary exhibitions, in the Searing Wing.

The museum features a growing collection of Asian art, including Indian sculptures, Chinese ceramics, and Japanese prints. The collection is housed in the Center for Asian Art, which includes a separate teahouse located nearby.



CIRCUS MUSEUM



The original Circus Museum was established in 1948 to honor the memory of John Ringling. It is the first museum to document the rich history of the American circus. It features circus posters, costumes, wagons, and the *Wisconsin*, the luxurious private railcar used by John and Mable Ringling to travel the country for business and pleasure.

At the heart of the Tibbals Learning Center, located next door, is the amazing *Howard Bros. Circus Model*, the largest miniature circus in the world. The center also features displays on circus performers, past and present, as well as hands-on interactives that allow visitors of all ages to become center-ring stars.



CA' D'ZAN



The Ringlings' historic mansion was designed by architect Dwight James Baum to resemble a Venetian Gothic palace, similar to those admired by John and Mable on their trips to Italy. Its name, *Ca' d'Zan*, means "House of John" in Venetian dialect.

The mansion was built between 1924 and 1926 at a cost of \$1.5 million. It occupies 36,000 square feet and comprises fifty-six rooms, decorated by skilled artisans and furnished with beautiful antiques.

The mansion served as the Ringlings' winter residence, where they entertained family and friends, including politicians and celebrities of the day. It offers a glimpse into the lives of the rich and famous during the Roaring Twenties.



HISTORIC ASOLO THEATER



The Historic Asolo Theater was built in Asolo, Italy, in 1798. It originally occupied the great hall of a Renaissance palace built for Caterina Cornaro, the exiled queen of Cyprus.

The theater was acquired in 1949 by The Ringling's first director, Chick Austin, who initially installed it in a gallery of the Museum of Art. Now located in the Visitors Pavilion, the theater continues to serve as an active performing arts venue, featuring the best in drama, dance, music, and film.



EDUCATION CENTER



The Education Center houses staff offices, a classroom, conservation laboratory, and art library. Art-making activities and other educational programs are held in the classroom. Works from the collections are preserved in the laboratory for the benefit of future generations. More than 60,000 volumes are held in the library, which is open to the public. Highlights include some 800 books that belonged to John Ringling.



BAYFRONT GARDENS



The Ringling occupies sixty-six acres of grounds and gardens with breathtaking views of Sarasota Bay. The grounds feature hundreds of native and exotic trees, such as live oaks and banyans, as well as an abundance of wildlife, including fish and birds. Among the gardens is the oldest rose garden in Florida, founded by Mable Ringling in 1913. Near the rose garden is the Bolger Playspace, recognized as one of the premier playgrounds in the country.

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