

FEATHERS, SILK, AND PLAYFUL SEDUCTION

In a city where masks whisper and canals remember, the Venice Burlesque Festival rises like a silk fan unfurled beneath candlelight. Set within a historic theatre and woven into the living fabric of *La Serenissima*, it is the only truly international burlesque festival born and staged in Venice itself.



Venice has always understood theatre. It performs itself at dawn, when the lagoon glows like mother-of-pearl; it performs at dusk, when footsteps echo beneath Gothic arches and masks flicker in golden light. It is therefore no coincidence that the *Venice Burlesque Festival* has found its home in the historic Teatro A L'Avogaria - an intimate jewel box of a theatre where past and present share the same breath.

Now in its second edition, the festival stands as the only truly international burlesque festival conceived and organised within the city of Venice itself. It is not a borrowed spectacle, nor a passing import. It is

rooted in the Venetian cultural fabric, honouring the irony, sensuality and theatrical sophistication that have animated the city since the days of Carnival and Commedia dell'Arte.

At its helm is Crazy Cat, Venetian by birth and spirit, artistic director and creator of the festival. A burlesque performer for over a decade, she has shaped this event alongside the historic *Compagnia de Calza l'Antichi*, the cultural association *Arte-Mide* - devoted to research and theatrical production on the social history of independent women - and the artistic collective *Le Burlescosc by Crazy*

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Cat. Together, they have woven burlesque into Venice's own narrative of freedom, wit and feminine power. Over two luminous days, the festival unfolded between workshops, a sold-out gala performance and an evocative photographic session. Fourteen performers arrived from across Italy and half of Europe, bringing with them feathers, satire and unapologetic glamour. On stage they were accompanied by the festival French headliner Betty Crispy and the Godmother Sweet Pepper, they competed for the coveted titles inspired by Venetian tradition: *La Dogaressa*, *La Colombina* and *La Corallina*. For 2026, the crown of *Dogaressa* was awarded to

Nathalie Sonnenschine, with Miss Christine Lollidol named *Colombina* and Ginger La Coquette honoured as *Corallina*. The Audience Prize, *La Gondola*, was claimed by Emmaralde - proving how the intimate dialogue between performer and spectator defines true burlesque. The Venice Burlesque Festival stands as an act of cultural belonging. Within the walls of A L'Avogaria, velvet gloves meet Renaissance shadows, and contemporary muses echo the laughter of masked revellers. In celebrating burlesque, Venice celebrates herself - her sensual intelligence, her irreverent elegance, her eternal capacity to seduce the world.