



ENGLISH



WELCOME! The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art is the remarkable legacy of circus entrepreneur, collector of art, and financier, John Ringling and his wife, Mable. The 66-acre estate includes the Museum of Art, the Venetian-Gothic *Ca' d'Zan* mansion, their winter-residence; the 18th-century Historic Asolo Theater; Circus Museum, and historic grounds and gardens.

BUILDING ON A LEGACY

Blessed with entrepreneurial genius, John Ringling (1866-1936) and his brothers founded the Ringling Bros. Circus, which continues today as the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, *The Greatest Show on Earth!* With his beloved wife, Mable (1875-1929), John created their lasting legacy, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. Upon his death, John Ringling left his art collection and estate to the people of the State of Florida. In 2000, the State of Florida transferred stewardship of The Ringling Museum to Florida State University, establishing The Ringling estate as one of the largest museum/university complexes in the country. John and Mable's legacy and vision continues to endure and grow, reflected and preserved in the museums, education center, grounds and gardens of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, the State Art Museum of Florida.

A PASSION FOR ART

European travel had kindled the Ringlings' passion for art. John Ringling purchased masterpieces by Rubens, van Dyck, Titian, Velázquez, El Greco, Gainsborough, and a collection of Cypriot antiquities purchased from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, among other works. He dreamed of establishing Sarasota as a cultural destination. In 1925, Ringling engaged architect John H. Phillips to design a museum in Renaissance style with graceful colonnades opening onto an Italianate garden. In October 1931, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art was dedicated and opened to the public. Today, The Ringling Museum of Art exhibits a celebrated collection of European, American and Asian works, as well as modern and contemporary art.

The Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing Wing of the Museum of Art is home to traveling and focused exhibitions. The addition is also the location of *Joseph's Coat*, the Skyspace created by James Turrell, a contemporary architectural masterpiece of light, sky and ambient sound.

A NATIONAL TREASURE, A TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S GILDED AGE



John and Mable fell in love with Mediterranean architecture and were determined that their home on Sarasota Bay would emulate the grandeur of the Venice's Doge's Palace and the famous minaret of the Giralda Tower of Seville in Spain. The *Ca' d'Zan* mansion, meaning "House of John", was designed by Dwight James Baum for John Ringling and completed in 1926. It is the largest historical mansion on the west coast of Florida. The Ringlings' palatial estate attracted such luminaries of the time, such as New York Governor Al Smith, New York Mayor Jimmy Walker, celebrities Flo Ziegfeld, Billie Burke, Will Rogers, and many others.

The Ringling





THE CITY THE CIRCUS NEVER LEFT

In 1927, John Ringling moved the winter quarters of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey to Sarasota and established the area's dynamic circus tradition. In 1948, the Circus Museum at The Ringling became the first museum to document the rich history of the circus. With many circus people living nearby, the collection grew quickly. Today, the building houses the *Wisconsin*, John and Mable Ringling's private railroad car, as well as beautifully carved parade wagons, rare handbills and art prints, circus paper, business records, wardrobe, performing props, and all types of circus equipment.



The Howard Bros. Circus Model is the world's largest miniature circus, and the cornerstone of the Circus Museum in the Tibbals Learning Center. This replica in miniature of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey was created by circus historian and philanthropist Howard Tibbals. The model is a 3/4-inch-to-the-foot scale and features eight circus tents and 42,000 objects in a 3,800 square foot exhibition space and replicates the tented circus when it was at its largest (circa 1919-1938). The Tibbals Learning Center also includes a history of the American circus and interactive gallery, celebrating the history of circus performance art from the 19th century. Visitors can walk a high wire, be part of a circus poster and try to fit into a 2-foot by 3-foot model car made famous by clown Lou Jacobs.

A JEWEL BOX OF A THEATER

Treasured and revered as the nascent center of Sarasota, Florida's flourishing culture of performing arts, The Ringling Historic Asolo Theater is also one of the most important architectural documents ever brought to America.

Created in Asolo, Italy, in 1798, the palace playhouse came to The Ringling in the early 1950s. From this important stage sprang much of the theater, opera, and music that established this Gulf Coast city as one of the nation's leading cultural centers.



In 2006, following nearly three years of painstaking restoration, the theater was reset in a new pavilion just inside the historic *Ca' d'Zan* Gatehouse on The Ringling estate; Here it serves as a performance venue for a diverse roster of music, theater, dance, and film. Designed to honor a queen, the newly equipped theater is ideally suited for today's discerning patrons of the performing arts. As the house lights dim and the curtains part, the gilded ornamentation and simulated jewels gracing both proscenium and parapets reflect the brilliance of the artistry on stage.

NATURE'S ART—BEAUTIFUL GARDENS, GROUNDS

The Ringling Bayfront Gardens encompass 66-acres of bayfront beauty. Home to thirteen historic banyan trees, a waterfront Bolger Promenade & Campiello, tree trails, and pathways and gardens, including Mable Ringling's Rose Garden. This 28,909 square foot garden completed in 1913 is patterned after a wagon wheel, a traditional Italian garden design. The beauty of the grounds, gardens and the legacy of John and Mable Ringling left behind are meticulously cared for by The Ringling staff and include the newly installed David F. Bolger Playspace, for families.



CONTINUING TO EDUCATE, PRESERVE

The Johnson-Blalock Education Center is a modern, 68,000 square foot facility on the south side of the property that serves to promote and expand The Ringling's education mission. It houses The Ringling Art Library. One of the largest and most comprehensive art museum libraries in southeast with nearly 85,000 holdings on art, history and the circus. The collection includes more than 700 books from the Ringlings' personal library. A state-of-the-art conservation laboratory where conservators preserve the Museum's collections is also part of the Education Center.

