

You could almost hear the song of the gondoliers as you surveyed the superb Venetian setting designed by The Showstoppers. The Venetian theme was developed for the Film Festival after it accepted two entries, *Bread, My Sweet* and *Face to Face*, both starring and directed by Scott Biao. The 8th International Sedona Film Festival's Gala event held at the Enchantment Resort was enchanting indeed. A true, feeling of an old world atmosphere was crafted by a life-size mural replicating the Piazza de San Marcos, known as Venice's social and cultural center. The 'piazza stage' was guarded by winged lions that were brought to life with flaming torches. Golden-glazed masks and gargoyles appropriately dramatized the canvas city that housed directors, movie stars and festival supporters. Colored lanterns and dolphins created a carnival mood.

The architectural accuracy of the faux city was excellent, right down to the smallest of details, like the winged lions. Lion statues can be found throughout the city of Venice and are related to St. Mark the Apostle. History states that several Venetian men went to Egypt to reclaim the body of St. Mark. A great storm arose at sea and they said that Saint Mark appeared to the captain and warned him to strike all his sails immediately or their ship would be wrecked upon some hidden rocks. They credited their safety to this miracle. After his body was smuggled back to Venice, the Apostle Mark was named the city's patron saint. The apostle's traditional symbol—a winged lion—became the logo of the Venetian Republic. His body still remains today with other saints in the San Marcos Cathedral.

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