



TRAVEL

South Beach "Art Deco-Ville"



By Richard Levy

Imagine a sophisticated tropical place right on the ocean with powdery white sand beaches, crystal clear water, breathtaking Art Deco buildings, world-class restaurants, museums and art galleries; high end fashion shopping and endless water sports, all a mere 2 1/2 hour flight away.

This place could only be South Beach, or "SoBe" as the locals refer to it. Luxurious, spectacular and somewhat decadent, Miami Beach is where the beautiful people escape. (Ironic, since they're destined to bump into the same folks they've just escaped from!) You know who they are: the folks sitting in First Class on the flight to West Palm Beach, serenely sipping champagne as you schlep your carry-on past them to your cramped Coach seat. They look so pampered, pretentious, polished and oh-so-entitled in their fashionable attire; not wrinkle in their botoxed faces while you look as if you *really* need a vacation. (Don't dare wear a sweat suit or shorts on the plane to WPB and for sure, don't

bring a Selfi Stick, as it will be confiscated! If you spring for an "airbrush golden tan" before you go, you will arrive looking very posh.)

By the way, be prepared to pay through your "possibly modified" nose with every move you'll make in SoBe. It is very expensive, but trust me, absolutely worth it. Luxury reigns and it's contagious. If you just let yourself go, you'll quickly feel as if you belong and you're "one of them" --deserving to be there. Your senses will quickly become completely expanded, refreshed and sometimes violated; but you'll love every minute of it and will beg for more.

Now If I haven't scared you away, fasten your seatbelts, you're in for an amazing vacation. First, you must know that SoBe is unequivocally the "people watching" capital of the world and it's worth the price of admission. Everywhere you go, whatever you do in SoBe, 24/7, you'll find yourself gazing upon more bronzed, bejeweled, plastic-enhanced, runway fashion clad women there then anywhere else, including Rodeo Drive, Positano and Cote d Azur. Women in string bikinis



line the beaches, including the occasional topless French beauties. It's been called "The American Riviera" which sounds absolutely right to me. And the men who accompany these très chic women are not too shabby either in their "Vilebrequin" bathing suits, gold Rolex watches, Gucci loafers and Armani sunglasses.

SoBe is fabulous, even during the summer. In December, the international art world descends upon SoBe for Art Basel, to see, be seen and spend millions on the artwork of emerging artists they think will become the next Picasso,

Rothko or Haring. South Beach has become an international playground, so you're sure to hear a lot of French, Italian and Russian.

Foodies will be constantly delighted as local restaurants relentlessly try to out-innovate each other. The late night "very selective" clubs here compare to the best ones in St. Tropez, Berlin and Paris. (To gain entry, dress to the nines, wear designer sunglasses and say something flamboyant in French or Italian.)

Everyone in SoBe appears to be better looking, more beautifully tanned, more successful and more fashionably

dressed than you are. Don't be intimidated: it's just an illusion; perhaps you've had too much sun or one too many Margarita's.

The three reigning hotels to consider are the art deco Ritz-Carlton, the Sagamore, an all-suite hotel that looks like an edgy art gallery, or the gorgeous Setai, which looks like an Asian Museum. These are all so decadently fabulous, you can't miss.

For a classic beachfront Art Deco hotel consider The Tides, in the heart of SoBe, the tallest art deco hotel on the strip and all of the rooms have a dramatic ocean view. Or stay in my very favorite Art Deco boutique hotel, the Albion: beautiful inside and out, located near Lincoln Road and close to a private beach. The rooms are minimalist-modern, with service to-die-for and surprisingly it costs a lot less than any of the luxurious trendy places. Also consider the Ocean Surf Hotel located on a secluded stretch of sand; a great escape from the South Beach hustle and bustle. The porthole windows in their oceanfront rooms will make you feel like you're aboard a cruise ship.

If you are bringing kids, the best place to stay is Loews Miami Beach Hotel, with spacious rooms and special Kids Camp programs for children ages 4 to 12. If you want to get away "alone" for a few hours, Loews has lots of activities to keep kids entertained, like pizza parties and movie nights.

In the roaring 20's, Miami became the winter warm-weather playground of the rich, famous and notorious gangster bootleggers. Then in the 30's, middle class tourists started coming down, so they had to build some affordable new hotels.

During the Depression, architect Henry Hohauser chose Art Deco as his primary design because it was affordable, distinctive and the perfect antidote

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South Beach

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to the doom and gloom of hard times. He and other architects added all kinds of whimsical touches to buildings like portholes, racing bands and wedding cake designs. Images of rolling waves were painted on the walls of buildings. These candy-colored buildings helped create a fantasy world where people could escape from reality. Other innovative architectural flourishes included the addition of bold silver and gold industrial motifs influenced by the dramatic curves of ocean liners.

I suggest you take both the day and night tours of South Beach and then come back at your own pace to linger in awe. (If you take just one tour, go at night when the art deco neon is all aglow). Go to the Art Deco Center for information, to book a tour or rent a Self-Guided Audio Tour: www.mdpl.org. The tours, given by knowledgeable local historians and architects, are fabulous. Ninety-minute tours are sponsored by the Miami Design Preservation League and begin at the Art Deco Welcome Center.

SoBe has been called a living museum, not only for its spectacular art deco but also for its 1920s "Mediterranean Revival" and 1950s "MiMo" (Miami Modern) buildings. Pick up a map of architectural walking routes from the gift shop at the Art Deco Center. In SoBe even the Lifeguard Stands are art deco, manned

by lifeguards who look like they've been sculpted out of bronze. (Let's hope they can also swim.)

Be sure to visit the fabulous Rubell Family Collection, housed in an old warehouse. Don and Mera Rubel have accumulated some of the most important works of artists, from the 70s to the present, including Jeff Koons, Keith Haring and Cindy Sherman. This collection is considered to be one of the finest collections of new modern art to be found anywhere. Take their complimentary audio tour to learn more about the artists who have shaped the modern era. Art aficionados will also want to visit the Perez Art Museum Miami and the Bass Museum of Art. Don't miss the very moving Holocaust Memorial: a huge 42 ft. tall bronze sculpture depicting refugees desperately clinging onto a huge bronze arm that reaches up out of the ground.

Golf fanatics should head straight for Crandon Golf, located on Key Biscayne, a tropical barrier island. (Make reservations before you leave NY.) For entertainment, check out the sensational Adrienne Arsht Center that includes an Opera house, Concert Hall, Theater and an outdoor Plaza for the Arts where there's always an event going on, so make reservations early.

Kids will enjoy a visit to the Seaquarium, which is not far from South Beach and fun even without kids. There's Lolita the Killer Whale, Flipper, thousands of tropical fish and huge sharks.

If you're into water sports you

can go deep-sea fishing for Marlin or Sailfish on a Charter Boat for the day, rent a sailboat, go windsurfing, go water skiing, snorkeling or go scuba diving by an old reef or ship wreck. Or relax and enjoy a romantic cruise at sunset. I love having breakfast or hanging out anytime at the iconic outdoor News Café on Ocean Avenue where you can watch the South Beach parade pass by 24/7. Opened in 1988, the café has become the place to crash, read the NY papers and linger over their freshly made coffee. You can order their signature eggs Benedict, French toast or bagel with nova all day long and don't forget their fresh squeezed Florida orange juice.

It's going to be hot, so be sure to stop at the famous Frieze Ice Cream Factory on Lincoln Road. Try as many flavors as you can. I can personally recommend: Chocolate Decadence, Indian Mango and Key Lime.

Your hotel will probably have its own private beach, but be sure to also venture out to the Public beach on Ocean Drive. Rent a portable cabana to escape the hot mid-day sun. Later, linger over drinks in any of the chic Ocean Drive outdoor cafes for some of the best people watching in SoBe where the parade never ends.

Suggesting the best SoBe restaurants isn't easy, but three places I love are Bianca, serving Italian food, as good as I've had anywhere in Italy. You absolutely must go to Azul, where you might be sitting at a table next to George Clooney or Catlin Jenner. Order anything the Captain suggests and you'll be in heaven.

One of my favorite places to eat is Pied a Terre, a small, classic French Restaurant, located inside the Cadet Hotel, which feels like a cozy neighborhood restaurant in Paris.

One of the hottest people watching places with some of the best food in SoBe, is Pubbelly, serving Asian-Latin inspired small plates filled with inventive treats.

No trip to Miami is complete without sending time in "Little Havana." Take a taxi to colorful Calle Ocho and just wander around. It's like being in old Havana without the vintage cars. The street is lined with old world cigar factories and cafes playing Cuban music. You must try their guava paste pastries and rose petal flan.

When you get to 27th Ave and 8th St you'll be astonished to discover huge paintings of giant roosters on the walls. For authentic delicious Cuban lunch, stop at any of the small family run restaurants and order their daily special.

For a memorable day trip head over to the lovely Villa Vizcaya, an Italian Renaissance-style villa built for industrialist James Deering in the 1900s, just a few miles south of downtown Miami on Biscayne Bay. Visitors can tour the historic house museum, filled with furnishings, tapestries and artwork purchased during Deering's buying sprees throughout Europe.

SoBe's best shopping is located three main areas: Washington Avenue, The Espanola Way and the Lincoln Road Mall. The mall has been transformed into an spectacular, endless

shopping and dining experience of outdoor cafes, boutiques and galleries.

Since 1987 the New World Symphony at Lincoln Theater has been the must go to place for classical music in Miami Beach. Here the best young musicians in the country compete for the symphony's 85 positions in national auditions.

For one of the best views in Sobe, head to the glitzy Gansevoort Miami Beach hotel on Collins Avenue, have drinks on their rooftop lounge bar 18 floors up with spectacular views of South Beach and the Ocean. No matter how many times you stroll along Ocean Drive during the day, just wait until the first time you stroll here after 6pm. Every evening Ocean Drive is transformed into a magnificent neon wonderland: its palm trees and art deco buildings light up like an electric rainbow on speed.

Which airline to fly to WPB? As usual I love Jet Blue, they go out of their way make you feel at home and once there, you don't have to rent a car in SoBe, you can walk to just about everywhere or take a taxi. By the time you're ready to leave, I'm sure you'll surely be tanned, well-clad, and well-informed on the subtle body-language of the beautiful people. So don't be surprised if when you are strolling down Ocean Drive, or dining in a trendy restaurant, wide-eyed tourists start "people-watching you!" When that magical moment happens, it will make the fortune you just spent on your luxurious week in Sobe worth every penny! Bon voyage.

LOCAL LORE

'How Hard Is My Fate': The Arnold-André Drama, Act 3



By Robert Scott

The curtain now opens on the third and final act in the drama of a treason that nearly succeeded.

In American hands, West Point immobilized and neutralized British forces in the lower Hudson Valley. With its fortifications on high cliffs, it was almost impregnable from the landside and beyond the reach of guns on ships in

the river below.

Aside from the loss of its garrison and a large store of ordinance, capture of this strong point by the British would have made King's Ferry, a crucial link between the colonies, no longer tenable.

Loss of control of the Hudson would have driven a giant wedge between the colonies. With the river opened to British warships and supply vessels, the

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Fidelity Medal awarded to the 3 captors of Major Andre: John Paulding, Issac Van Wart and David Williams



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