

What Travel Writers Say

The Great Winter Escape - Palm Beach County Florida

© By George Bailey

Life is short. There's a clock ticking, and at my age the hands are ticking faster so I decided at the last minute to leave my world and head for exploration and relaxation in what's described as "America's First Resort Destination," Palm Beach County, Florida which encompasses 39 communities. I visited three.

Palm Beach encompasses a stunning, thin, sixteen-mile-long island separated by the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway. It's a year-round town of 10,000 which grows to 30,000 during the winter months, and makes a statement about style and sophistication. Assorted high rollers, billionaire industrialists, designers, movie stars and famous singers not only come to play but to live here. Why? Eighty-year-old, life-long resident, Marie Jones, says, "It's quiet; we have little, if any crime, there's perfection and order, and our streets are clean". She was correct.



The sleek and comfortable Colony Hotel was my weekend home. You pay for the pleasure, but the memories are worth it. My first day focused on the hotel's gorgeous pool and the nearby beach, where I soaked up the 83-degree weather as a gentle breeze drifted in from the Atlantic, a delicious moment made sweeter by the fact that it was freezing back home.

In the evening, I enjoyed dinner in the Colony's Royal Room Cabaret where Broadway Singer Avery Sommers wowed the sold-out dinner crowd. Later, I hung out with the well-healed in the hotel's cool Polo Lounge, listening and dancing to a Motown dance band.

Next morning I took a tour in a beetle bug with my guide, Leslie Diver (info@islandlivingph.com). She drove along South Ocean Beach Boulevard, aka Billionaires Row, and pointed out many homes of the twenty-two billionaires who reside here. Some included Rod Stewart (He might have been the guy bringing in the mail), Rush Limbaugh, Donald Trump, Ann Coulter, former Canadian Conrad Black and David Koch, the 4th richest man in America.

We visited the must-see Henry Flagler Museum and marveled outside the museum at a giant Kapok tree planted in the 1890's.

Afternoon was spent along tree-lined Worth Avenue (only a block from the hotel), known as the "Rodeo Drive of the East Coast." Bring lots of money for the impressive collection of



shops such as Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Chanel, Gucci and Tiffany's. Don't miss the historic Town Hall and Fire Station, the Clock Tower and the Living Wall.



West Palm Beach, a more affordable city, is found on the mainland opposite Palm Beach and is home to two retail and entertainment districts - City Place and the Clematis Street District. A complimentary trolley connects the two.

I visited the Saturday morning Green Market at the end of Clematis Street, alive with action. Palm Beachers love their small dogs so don't be surprised to see them at the market and in restaurants. Some owners dress them up and push them in strollers. There's a doggy water fountain at the market. Bradley's Saloon is a good place to grab a bite to eat but be prepared to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance when the U.S. Flag is raised daily at noon.

City Place at night is where you want to hang out if you belong to the generation that comes alive after 11 pm. Try Brewzzi City Place Restaurant that overlooks the courtyard for wings and pizza.

Delray Beach, located at the southern end of the island, has an eclectic feel. There's a terrific public beach and a traditional main street with brick sidewalks and gaslight street lamps. Majorie Ferrer, town spokesperson, with an infectious smile, says, "We're a village by the sea with one of the most beautiful beaches in South Florida." This lovely town won the coveted "All-American City" award in 1993 and 2001. Say hello to John Gergen at Caffe LunaRosa on Ocean Boulevard. You might have to wait to get a seat, but it will be worth it.

George Bailey contributes to Sun Media's 43 paid-circulation newspapers across Canada as well as numerous magazines. George has appeared on CNN, Good Morning America, Canada AM, The Discovery Channel, and Live with Regis and Cathy Lee. He has published five books on Niagara Falls.

Photo Credits

George Bailey

How to get there:

There's a new and direct two-hour flight offered Monday, Friday and Saturdays from the Niagara Falls International Airport by DIRECTAIR: www.myrtlebeachdirectair.com or

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1-877-432-3473. Here's the other good news, expect to pay just over \$200.00 for a round trip. This includes all taxes. Parking at the airport: \$7.00 per day.

If you go



This destination
as seen on
YouTube

Palm Beach County, Florida: www.palmBeachFL.com or 1-800-833-5733.

Colony Hotel: www.thecolonypalmbeach.com or 1-800-521-5525

Henry Flagler Museum: www.flaglERMuseum.us

Green Market: www.wpb.org/greenmarket

Delray Beach: www.downtowndelraybeach.com

Caffe LunaRosa: <http://www.caffelunarosa.com/>

Visit Florida: www.VISITFLORIDA.com or 1-866-972-5280

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palm_Beach_County

Wikitravel: http://wikitravel.org/en/Palm_Beach_County

About.com:

http://goflorida.about.com/od/museumssciencecenters/p/museum_flagler.htm

Churches & Synagogues:

<http://palmbeachchamber.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.worship&x=9988817>

Fiction:

http://www.historyofthemystery.com/florida_mysteries.php?page=44

What's happening, money, distance, time?

Media Guide: <http://www.abyznewslinks.com/>

Currency conversion: <http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

Distance calculator: <http://www.indo.com/distance/>

Time zone converter: <http://www.timezoneconverter.com/>

Transportation, visas, health, maps and temperature

Airlines (Wikipedia):

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_airlines

Embassies/Consulates (Embassy World):

<http://www.embassyworld.com/>

Health precautions (WHO): <http://www.who.int/ith/en/>

Google interactive map: <http://maps.google.com/>
Temperature (Temperature World):
<http://www.temperatureworld.com/>

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