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Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa

THE PALM BEACHES OFFER AN ABUNDANCE OF SUNSHINE, SAND AND MEETING SPACES IN SOUTHEAST FLORIDA.

By Morgan Halaska

The reputation of “America’s First Resort Destination” often precedes itself, with images of the wealthy vacationing in The Palm Beaches, which consists of 39 cities in southeast Florida. But dig deeper and you’ll discover humble roots. Considered the vegetable heartland of the country, agriculture is the area’s No. 1 economic driver and responsible for connecting the southeast of the state to the west.

Connectedness remains a theme in The Palm Beaches. The Brightline, a high-speed train soon to be called Virgin Trains USA, links West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and

Miami, with connections to Orlando planned for 2022. The Downtown Convention District features 1,200 guest rooms within 1.2 miles, with Palm Beach International just 3 miles away. Rosemary Square, across the street from the center, is an indoor/outdoor mixed-used space packed with local businesses and dining.

Sustainability initiatives are prevalent—solar trees from FPL SolarNow line the pathway to the Palm Beach County Convention Center, providing shade while harnessing the sun’s power and generating emissions-free energy. Groups can work environmental education into agendas, as Gumbo Limbo Nature Center protects and rehabilitates sea turtles and clothing maker 4ocean cleans the sea and coastline. Both culture and luxury are abundant here, making it a destination like no other.

On Water

Waterstone Resort & Marina—the only Four-Diamond boutique hotel in Boca Raton—over-

looks both the Atlantic Ocean and Intracoastal Waterway. Its location is reflected in its dining experiences (headed by chef Kelley Randall) and meeting spaces. The 4,650-square-foot Atlantic Ballroom features floor-to-ceiling windows that overlook both bodies of water. Watersport rentals and chartered excursions are available from the marina, including Palm Breeze Charters, which picks up at the hotel and cruises the manicured Intracoastal Waterway.

Featuring the “happy chic” design of Jonathan Adler, Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa is a bright and luxe stay located on 7 acres of oceanfront. One of eight Forbes Five-Star resorts in Florida, guests are offered a glass of bubbly upon arrival and have access to the 42,000-square-foot Eau Spa, which is all about self-care and playful relaxation.

Opened Feb. 13, The Ben is West Palm Beach’s only waterfront hotel, overlooking Palm Harbor Marina; its rooftop ballroom is the only of its kind in the city. True of all Marriott

PHOTOS: MORIS MORENO



Waterstone Resort & Marina

FOOD & DRINK

There are more than 3,200 restaurants in The Palm Beaches; here's a small but tasty sampling.

RH ROOFTOP RESTAURANT: Restoration Hardware's four-level retail concept features a rooftop culinary experience that is as delicious as it is impeccably designed.

STEEL TIE SPIRITS: The largest craft distillery in the Southeast United States serves high-quality spirits and offers a Cocktail Academy, teaching guests when to shake and when to stir. Co-owner Ben Etheridge has built a community here through his tireless work to change the state's distillery laws.

GRANDVIEW PUBLIC MARKET: There's something for everyone in this 13,000-square-foot space that supports chefs, artists and entrepreneurs in their epicurean experimentation.

FARMER'S TABLE: True to its name, sustainability-focused food is served from an environmentally friendly kitchen.

LOUIE BOSSI'S: Whether it's the Neapolitan pizza or homemade pasta, there's no going wrong any way you order from this authentic Italian restaurant from chef Louie Bossi.

THE REGIONAL KITCHEN & PUBLIC HOUSE: Chef Lindsay Autry delights with her southern fare; don't pass on the pimento cheese that's prepared tableside.



Lion Country Safari

Autograph Collection hotels, the 208-room boutique pulls inspiration from the area's history. Its namesake, the Ben Trovato Estate, got its moniker from the Italian phrase "se non è vero, è ben trovato," which means, "even if it isn't true, it's a good story." Owner, socialite and author Byrd Spillman Dewey's knack for hospitality and storytelling permeates The Ben, making for a comfortable and inspiring stay.

On Land

While the 47 miles of beach are a major draw, there are plenty of land-based activities for groups. Lion Country Safari is Palm Beach County's largest tourist attraction. The 1,000-plus animals, while controlled and monitored, roam naturally through the preserve. VIP driving tours take guests behind the scenes, allowing them to pet a rhino's surprisingly soft

underbelly, observe chimps' quirky behavior and more. Drive Shack is a three-level sports and social entertainment complex full of gaming and golf for social events and team-building activities in West Palm Beach. With 96 climate-controlled driving bays, a rooftop and full-service restaurant and bar, Drive Shack is a popular option that caters to groups of any size.

One of the best ways to experience Palm Beach is with the charismatic Leslie Diver, who guides driving, biking and walking Island Living Tours. Covering topics that range from architecture to the lowdown on residents both famous and infamous, Diver goes deep with facts and stories.

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