



**Miami
(South Beach)
Florida
Travel Guide**

ACCOMMODATIONS • DINING • NIGHTLIFE • INFORMATION
SPECIAL OFFERS AND LOTS MORE!

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MIAMI (SOUTH BEACH), FLORIDA

OUT & ABOUT TravelGuides are frequently updated. This TravelGuide was last updated 8/03. Still, there are places that are bound to have closed or changed since our last update. Use the listed phone numbers to call ahead, and please let us know of any corrections or new places of interest you discover.

Most gay tourists to Miami aren't really going to Miami at all. The city of Miami is the heart of the greater Miami metropolis and a major international business district, a conduit to international trade with Central and South America. While you may have to stay downtown for business, you won't want to play here. Likewise, nearby Coral Gables is Miami's high-rent district, a classy neighborhood with elegant hotels and dining, but little gay presence. It is South Beach, the southernmost end of the oceanfront city of Miami Beach, that is home to Miami's gay community and tourist venues. The adage "everything old is new again" certainly applies to the community of South Miami Beach. Once a glittering stretch of luxury hotels and fancy nightclubs and then a seaside ghetto for poor retirees, South Beach has undergone a renaissance of grand proportions that is still continuing. Buildings that once sat vacant and crumbling have been purchased and renovated at a dizzying rate. The whole area is so gay popular, that the "mainstream" venues are all gay friendly, and gay travelers make up a large portion, if not the majority, of their business. Although service levels had been a problem, the ever-increasing number of stores, restaurants and nightlife options mean an increase in quality as well, as businesses operate in an increasingly competitive environment. And the jet set is still flocking to the area in droves. South Beach earns its reputation as the place to be in south Florida, and as one of the more vibrant seaside communities in the country.

South Beach is an entirely different kind of gay destination from the more traditional gay resorts. Where the others are low key with broad appeal, South Beach is high energy and high fashion. It attracts a fast-lane crowd, including a lot of New Yorkers who commute down on winter weekends, muscle boys, circuit queens, lipstick lesbians, and everyone in the fashion business. The club scene is cutting edge, and the beach scene looks like the Undergear catalog come to life. Although this can be intimidating to the genetically less fortunate and steroid-free, sophisticated travelers love Miami's unique combination of diverse cultures that collide and fuse together. It is, all at once, urban like New York City, laid back like the Caribbean and trendy like Los Angeles, with a European flair thrown in for good measure — all this next to the almost-white sands and sparkling blue sea that have adorned postcards for decades. The center of all the action in South Beach is the Art Deco District. This square-mile area is made up of 800 buildings between 6th and 23rd streets and from Ocean Drive west to Lennox Avenue.

Overall, the crowd is certainly mixed, but gays are everywhere, and make no effort to hide their sexual identity.

WHEN & HOW TO GO

South Beach's high season runs November through April, although European and Latin American visitors keep coming through the summer months. In addition to the Christmas/New Year's peak travel period, the place is also mobbed for Thanksgiving weekend's White Party at Vizcaya, and the Winter Party, a human-rights fundraising dance party held on the beach in early March. Summer is definitely off-season, bringing real bargains, high humidity and slower nightlife. As an air transportation hub for Latin America and the Caribbean, Miami is easy to fly into from all over the United States and Europe, but especially from the Northeast. It's 20-30 minutes from the airport to the beach. Taxis and Super Shuttles are available. From the airport, a rental car is only recommended if you're going to venture beyond South Beach. Know how to get to the highway before you leave the rental lot, and be sure to read the safety recommendations given with your rental contract. It's often a better plan to rent a car at the beach instead. The very pleasant Ft. Lauderdale/Hollywood airport is about an hour from South Beach and offers a lot of additional flight options.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Miami accommodations have been on a wild ride since South Beach first rocketed into the gay mecca solar system. In the early '90s, South Beach hostelrys were interesting, but uneven at best. Really great accommodations were few and far between, and service was spotty, even at the top end of the market. Today, South Beach offers a full range of lodging options, from frightening to fabulous, and everything in between. While Style (definitely with a capital S) is firmly entrenched, substance is catching up, with hotel renovations focused on quality inside and out. Service, while still uneven, is approaching world-class standards. Most importantly, there are choices for all budgets that deliver real value for the dollar, and enough variety of styles to suit all types of travelers. For gay and lesbian travelers, South Beach is unique. Nowhere else is the mainstream hotel industry so tuned into, and dependent upon, the gay market. Gay travelers make up a significant percentage of the business at half of the hotels in town, and are comfortably welcomed at the other half. The heavy presence of fashion and music industry types has also shaped the market, with a focus on fun and whimsy, and a casual dress code: walking through the lobby in a bikini is surprisingly okay — as long as you look good in a bikini.

SOUTH BEACH ON A SCALE OF ONE TO FIVE

With the gay-comfort level so uniformly high, it's not a surprise that the town has so few gay guesthouses. These listings include a "Gay Factor" rating, which provides an approximation of how gay-popular and populated a hotel is. At the low end of this scale are hotels that cater primarily to the tour-group market, with limited gay appeal, no gay following, and no employees who register confirmed gay-dar blips. A high gay-factor rating indicates a property where you'll definitely see other gay travelers, gay employees, and a sense of style that is sure to have appeal for gay women and men. A gay factor of 100% indicates a property catering exclusively to the gay market. The Palm Ratings of One to Five Palms are fairly consistent with Palm Ratings in other markets. Five Palms indicates a lodging experience that ranks with the very best in the industry for quality of accommodations, furnishings, amenities and service. Properties with this rating should satisfy the most discerning travelers. Four Palms indicates a step up from the average in the level of amenities, more stylized decor and a broader array of services. Three Palms is an average rating. These recommended properties generally offer pleasant, comfortable accommodations and the amenities expected by most travelers. Two Palm properties are a step below the average level of accommodation, more likely to have lower prices, worn furnishings, minimal service and/or less appealing decor. One Palm establishments offer very basic accommodations and the lowest acceptable standards of service, decor and amenities. They are suitable only for the least picky of frugal travelers. All properties feature air conditioning, televisions, and phones, unless otherwise noted. Where refrigerator is indicated expect a small or mini one (think a college-dorm fridge).

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

First the basics. Miami Beach is a long, thin island, separated from the Florida mainland by Biscayne Bay, and connected by a number of bridges and causeways. The airport, the City of Miami and a few worthwhile attractions are on the mainland, but the beach is where you want to be. South Beach is the southern end of Miami Beach, up to about 25th Street, with most venues of interest clustered within a few blocks of 12th Street, the gay beach and along Lincoln Road. Addresses on the three main north-south streets (Ocean Drive, Collins Avenue and Washington Avenue) indicate the cross streets: 1200 Ocean is at 12th Street, 950 Washington is between 9th and 10th, and 1900 Collins is at 19th. Ocean Drive runs up to 15th Street, at which point Collins becomes the beachfront address. Lincoln Road, running east-west between 16th and 17th Streets, is becoming the prime focus of activity – a cool pedestrian mall lined with trendy stores and restaurants. For us, the perfect address is close to 12th Street, allowing easy walking access to just about everything in the quintessential South Beach realm. Ocean Drive addresses offer the hustle and bustle (and noise) of the beach. Washington and Collins are almost as convenient, without so

much constant traffic. Hotels on the east side of Collins Avenue above 15th Street tend to be high-rise buildings with big pools and beach access. **Staying Gay**

There are only a handful of “exclusively gay” and “heavily gay marketed” guesthouses in South Beach, including Jefferson House, European Guest House, South Beach Villas and Island House. Of these, only the **Island House** has what we consider a really good location (and not a whole lot else to recommend it), but some travelers may prefer the intimacy, comfort, freedom and local hosts of a gay guesthouse. We personally prefer the wider range of amenities offered by the mainstream properties with high gay-comfort ratings. **The Tides**, for example, offers three-way bathroom mirrors, telescopes in each room pointed at the gay beach, cordless 900-mMHz 2-line phones, topless poolside bathing, and all-male and all-female adult sections in their video rental library. It is at the high end of the price spectrum, but could you get more gay-friendly than that?

BOOKING YOUR STAY

Almost all of the properties listed are bookable through your travel agent, and a number are bookable through companies whose added services and negotiated rates may prove valuable. We recommend two inbound agencies for hotel reservations. They often have access to special rates and availability that are withheld from the general public. **The Florida Hotel Network** (800/293-2419, fax 305/538-5858, <http://www.floridahotels.com/>) has expanded their business far beyond their original South Beach territory, but they still do a great job of matching travelers to appropriate accommodations. They also have an inventory of condominium apartments and houses for rent. **Connections** (305/385-3844 or 800/688-8463, fax 305/382-1149; www.connectionstours.com) is also recommended for securing discounted rates on Florida hotels. South Beach is building its collection of large chain hotels with the Loews and Crowne Plaza, but it also has a small local chain of its own. **Island Outpost** (<http://www.islandoutpost.com/>), founded by Island Records impresario Chris Blackwell, has a growing collection of hotels in South Beach, in moderate to deluxe price categories. All properties feature stylish sensibilities, and all rooms offer cable TV, VCR, CD/cassette player, mini-bar, full-featured voice-mail phone system with inter-hotel calling and some reciprocal facilities. Concerned gay and gay-friendly management, commitment to quality and a true sense of style have made all of their properties popular. Their hotels are recognizable by the 800/OUTPOST phone number in their listings below.

FIVE PALM

ALL five-palm properties are Editor’s Choice Award winners.

Hotel Astor (956 Washington Ave; 305/531-8081 or 800/270-4981, fax 305/531-3193; www.hotelastor.com; High: \$155-900, Low:

\$145-800; Suites: \$500-900; Rooms=41; GF=High) You will not find a more classic Deco experience than the sophisticated, casual, elegant Astor. Large marble bathrooms, custom made furniture, Belgian linens, Molton Brown toiletries wool carpeting – all in warm, natural colors are inviting and luxurious. Some rooms are quite small; be sure to ask when reserving what the dimensions of the room are and how much closet/storage space there is. Room amenities include a 25" TV, stereo system, and voicemail phones. The hotel restaurant, The Metro Kitchen and Bar, serves contemporary American fused with Italian, Asian and French flavors in an urban deco environment, and the cute little pool and bar lounge are irresistible, though the pool is really little and there is sometimes an insufficient number of lounge chairs available for guest use. Ask about the guest discount to use Crunch gym. The Astor is a couple blocks from the beach but conveniently located near the stores, restaurants and bars along Washington. **Casa Grande** (834 Ocean Dr; 305/672-7003, 866/420-CASA or 800/OUTPOST, fax 305/673-3669, <http://www.casagrandehotel.com/>; \$150-1,500; Rooms=35; GF=High), a European-style inn with Balinese furnishings, is set inconspicuously in between the flashy Ocean Drive Deco buildings. The rooms are spacious studios and suites, with full kitchens and dressing areas. The decor is beautiful, and the gay and gay-friendly staff is eager to please. Remodeling Mezza Luna restaurant, will open in Fall 2003. **Casa Tua** (1700 James Ave; 305/673-0973, fax 305/673-0974), will open its five luxury suites sometime in fall 2003, meanwhile, the property boasts the 100-seat Casa Tua Italian restaurant by Sergio Sigala, from Le Diamant Rose restaurant in the south of France. **The Cardozo** (1300 Ocean Dr; 305/535-6500, 800/782-6500, fax 305/532-3563, <http://www.cardozohotel.com/home.htm>; Low: \$150-500, High: \$195-620; Rooms=43; GF=Med-High). Owned by Gloria and Emilio Estefan, this hip, beachfront property has undergone significant reconstruction. Rooms have been toned down from loud Caribbean to a more muted color scheme, with wood floors and doors, and light terra cotta colored walls with crown moldings. Plush and comfortable, the rooms are heavy on amenities: TV, VCR, CD/stereo, minibar, iron and ironing board, in-room safes and Gilchrist and Soames toiletries. We haven't yet visited since construction was complete but our research strongly suggests it rates a five palms. The 78-suite **Crescent Hotel** (1420 Ocean Drive; 305/604-8225 or 800/880-9041, fax 305/604-8233; www.crescentsuites.com; Low: \$168-445, High: \$355-700; penthouse: \$435-700), a 1938 Art-Deco jewel, displays the glamour of old Hollywood with elegant luxury cruise ship lines and a sleek, efficient design including 26 units, three rooftop Jacuzzis and solariums overlooking the ocean and fitness facility. Each living room includes a sleeper sofa and a full kitchen. The Penthouse comes with private rooftop terrace, whirlpool, and ocean view. Full meals are available. **Delano** (1685 Collins; 305/672-2000 or 800/555-5001, fax 305/532-0099, <http://www.ianschragerhotels.com/>; High: \$325-810, Low: \$245-660; Suites: \$600-3000; Rooms=195; GF=High). This triumph of style over substance, designed by Philippe Starck, is known

by owner Ian Schrager simply as "Delano." (Not "The Delano," just Delano.) It is a stunning vision in white – from cloud-like drapes hanging between tall white columns to the crisply white waiter uniforms. Rooms are heavenly, but lack warmth, intimacy and a place to put your toothbrush. The staff has finally toned down the attitude, but this is still an address mostly for those needing conspicuous validation of their fabulousness. The pool is breathtaking, the outdoor sculptural elements whimsical. Guests can use the David Barton gym on-site for free; Guests of the onsite Agua Spa and of the Shore Club pay \$15/day; friends of hotel guests pay \$15/day; and guests at some neighboring hotels pay \$20/day, not including pool access. The Agua spa, formerly women-only, is now women-only during the day and open to men 7:30-11 PM each evening. The **Blue Door** (see below), the restaurant formerly owned by Madonna, provides a costly but highly satisfying experience of dining among the glitterati. **the hotel** (801 Collins Ave; 305/531-2222 or 877-THE-HOTEL, fax:305/531-3222; thehotelofsouthbeach.com; info@thehotelofsouthbeach.com; Low: \$255-395, High \$275-425) delivers on its stylish promise as the collaboration between world-famous fashionista Todd Oldham and well-known historical preservationist Tony Goldman. The rooftop pool offers an exquisite view of the beach, and the whimsical room décor lends a sense of serenity to the property. The atmosphere can feel a tad straight and snobbish at times, but your ego can stand it, you'll feel very comfortable here. **Hotel Impala** (1228 Collins Ave; 305/673-2021 or 800/646-7252, fax 305/673-5984; www.hotelimpalamiamibeach.com; Low: \$145-325, High: \$185-400; Rooms=17; GF=High) This Spanish Revival jewel is sure to please. Tucked discreetly among its glitzier competitors, the Impala is entered through a gorgeous garden. This walk alone transports you thousands of miles away to the Mediterranean. The sumptuous rooms in natural colors, marble, and wrought iron are a pleasant counterpoint to all the Deco in town. Rooms have every necessary amenity (from high-tech entertainment to sophisticated communication), and the 24-hour service is intimate and understated. **Spiga** (see below), the on-site restaurant, offers delicious Mediterranean cuisine at surprisingly affordable prices. We love it. **Hotel Leon** (841 Collins Ave; 305/673-3767, fax 350/673-5866; <http://www.hotelleon.com/>; hotelleon@aol.com; High: \$125-345, Low: \$95-295; Rooms=18; GF=High) Fashion photo teams make up a big part of the business at this very stylish small hotel. The rooms feature a Mediterranean-industrial-Santa Fe look - hard to describe, but very appealing with beautiful terrazzo floors, yellow stucco walls, and a mix of appealing fabrics and exposed pipes. Room amenities include bathtubs, bathrobes, room safes, CD stereos and Alfred Sung toiletries. **Hotel Nash** (1120 Collins Ave; 305/674-7800, fax 305/538-8288; www.hotelnash.com; High:\$300-1400; Low: \$155-500 Rooms=55; GF=NA) was opened by many familiar faces from the Astor, but one-ups the Astor formula for stylish elegance, top-quality personalized service, delightful amenities and fine dining. An easy Five Palm and Editor's Choice rating for this stellar, gay-friendly, gay-marketed property in the

heart of South Beach. Try to avoid rooms in the back, which overlook an alley where garbage is noisily collected. The **Marlin** (1200 Collins Ave; 305/604-5063 or 800/OUTPOST, fax 305/673-9609; www.islandoutpost.com; High: \$325-380; Low: \$210-280; Penthouse: \$1500 Rooms=12; GF=High) Popular with models and musicians, each suite has a great stereo, a VCR, and WebTV. Lots of brushed aluminum and inviting Caribbean fabrics make the suites feel like a fabulous and comfortable *pied-à-terre*. **National Hotel** (1677 Collins Ave; 305/532-2311 or 800/327-8370, fax 305/534-1426; www.nationalhotel.com; High: \$340-2,800, Low \$270-2,000; Rooms=160; GF=Med) This renovated hotel features a spectacular 205-foot lap pool and classic Art Deco public rooms, including Tamara, a French-Fusion restaurant and a Deco bar. Rooms in the tower are surprisingly and significantly nicer than the pool-front rooms. The hotel is sophisticated, but with a slight generic Marriott-esque aura that we can't quite identify, but that is confined mostly to the lobby. An on-site gym custom designed for the hotel is run by Crunch and is charmingly referred to as the Crunch Cabana. **Hotel Ocean** (formerly Ocean Front Hotel, 1230 Ocean Dr; 305/672-2579 or 800/783-1725, fax 305/672-7665; www.hotelocean.com, info@hotelocean.com; High: \$250-600, Low: \$215-515, Suites: \$275-600; Rooms=27; GF=Med) The elegant Mediterranean decor varies from room to room, and includes original 1930's English and French furniture mixed with contemporary pieces. All rooms have a VCR, CD player, wet bar & refrigerator; some have a Jacuzzi and ocean-view balconies. The effect is sophisticated and refined, from the stone courtyard café out front, to the Roger-et-Gallet amenities, magnifying mirrors and monogrammed robes in the bath. Directly across from the gay beach, the small set-back from the street introduces a serene touch. The on-premises restaurant, **Les Deux Fontaines** (see below), serves a wide selection of seafood specialties accompanied by an impressive wine list. **The Pelican** (826 Ocean Dr; 305/673-3373 or 800/7-PELICAN, fax 305/673-3255; www.pelicanhotel.com, pelican@pelicanhotel.com; High: \$220-440, Low: \$135-380 Rooms=30; GF=High) The Diesel Jeans people own this hotel, and they spared no expense in equipping and decorating their 30 rooms, each of which reflects a different theme. The themes, such as the Psychedelic, Big Bamboo, and Me Tarzan, are well done, and not overbearing. The attention to quality and detail is incredible, and the furnishings have stood up remarkably well. Baths are small, but impressive, with huge 12" showerheads and very high-end toiletries. **The Raleigh** (1775 Collins Ave; 305/534-6300 or 800/848-1775, fax 305/538-8140; www.raleighhotel.com; High: \$275-650, Low \$195-425; Rooms=111; GF=High), one of SoBe's first fabulous hotels, is under new ownership as of November 2002. The hotel is currently open and operating, but be warned that major renovations are going on in some of the rooms and the pool and lobby are also being overhauled. Management estimates that construction will be completed by the end of 2003. Last time we visited, we felt like Esther Williams (the pool is spectacular), Jane Jetson (the touch-screen phone by the bed can

control the lights, AC, TV, VCR and stereo) and Mrs. Norman Maine (the quirky little lobby bar is immensely popular) all in the same evening. Service is friendly and informal; a really well equipped outdoor gym, an excellent restaurant and beach access keep this a winning choice (stay tuned for our updated verdict when construction is complete. The **Shore Club** (1901 Collins Ave; 305/695-3100, fax 305/695-3299; www.shoreclub.com; High: \$425-1175; Low: \$200-900) gives next-door rival Delano a white-hot run for its money. Done in cool white plaster, Mexican sandstone and lots of teak, the \$150-million, 325-room hotel (including two Deco hotels and a 21-story tower) has an oceanfront setting. **The Tides** (1220 Ocean Dr; 305/604-5070 or 800/OUTPOST, fax 305/672-6288; <http://www.islandoutpost.com>, reservations@islandoutpost.com; High: \$525-3000, Low: \$375-2000; Rooms=45; GF=High) How do we love thee? There's not enough space to count the ways. The Tides has been meticulously restored into an elegant hotel of choice. Rooms are large (the 45 units were created from 150 original rooms), and the decor is stylish and inviting. The staff is friendly and efficient. The room appointments are thoughtful and functional – from the 2-line 900mhz cordless phone, to the ample room for creams and lotions in the bathroom, already stocked with Aveda products. The beach—with its bladers, bathers, volleyball players and to-die-for muscle bunnies—is just across the street. The pool is great, the lobby is lovely and the 9th-floor suites are heaven.

FOUR PALM

The Albion Hotel (1650 James Ave. at Lincoln Rd; 305/913-1000 or 877/RUBELLS; fax 305/674-0507; www.rubellhotels.com; High: \$275-375, Low: \$165-265, Suites: \$225-750; Rooms=100; GF=High) The high style of the Albion is Deco-Zen, very appealing, especially in the lobby and bar areas. It's hard to know exactly what Steve Rubell's niece has in mind for this place, but it shows promise. Two lollipops and a bedtime story accompany turn-down service, and the bathrooms come outfitted with cucumber-scented toiletries. Yum. **Blue Moon Hotel** (944 Collins Ave; 305/673-2262 or 800/724-1623, fax 305/534-5399; www.bluemoonhotel.com, info@bluemoonhotel.com; High: \$205-425, Low: \$175-425, Suites: \$325-425; Rooms=72; GF=Low) When it was purchased and renovated by Merv Griffin, this Mediterranean-style hotel changed names, added rooms and delivered on its promising renovation plans, deserving a 4-Palm rating. Its Italianate look contrasts cheerfully with all the nearby Deco. The pool area is gorgeous. The hotel recently closed its Mediterranean-style restaurant, Cheeky Monkey, and there is still no dining to be had on-site. This property is located near Lincoln Mall Road and the Convention Center, making it convenient for both the leisure and business markets. Indeed, rooms boast two phone lines and private voice mail allowing workaholics to keep in touch with the office. **Cavalier** (1320 Ocean Dr; 305/531-3555 or 800/695-8284; High: \$185-395, Low: \$130-295; Suites: \$225-750; Rooms=46; GF=High)

Terrazzo floors and framed black and white photos in the rooms create a pleasant balance to the Caribbean-floral decor. Formerly an Island Outpost property, the Cavalier is under different management but it still has its great beachfront address. Although standard rooms are a bit small, the oceanfront suites are really great. Bring your camera: the oft-photographed facade will provide a dramatic backdrop for your holiday snapshots. **The Century** (140 Ocean Dr; 305/674-8855 or 888/982-3688, fax 305/538-5733; www.centurysouthbeach.com; rooms: \$95-215; suites: \$190-350; Rooms=31; GF=Med-High) A total gutting and designer re-do before our last visit endowed the Century with a very hip atmosphere, with marble and glass showers, linen-covered walls and hardwood floors. All guest rooms are Deluxe and equipped with amenities including CD players, voicemail and individual temperature control. In the bathroom, pamper yourself with Irish linen towels and Neutrogena products. Their successful, tasteful renovations and professional attitude merit a solid 4 (to possibly 5) palm rating. The Century's restaurant, **Joia** (see below) serves Tuscan dishes with a SoBe twist for dinner nightly. **Essex House Hotel and Suites** (1001 Collins Ave; 305/534-2700 or 800/553-7739, fax 305/523-3827; www.essexhotel.com; High: \$199-289, Low: \$129-189; Rooms=80; GF=Med) underwent \$3.5 million worth of renovations in the last few years (new color scheme: eggshell, white and mahogany), including the addition of luxury suites, a new lushly landscaped pool, martini bar, voicemail phones and sound-proof windows. Some of the luxury suites feature a whirlpool and wet bar. Along with the South Beach Villas, Island House and European Guest House, **The Jefferson House** (1018 Jefferson; 305/534-5247 or 877/599-5247, fax 305-534-5953; www.jeffersonhouse.com; Low: \$75-165, High: \$139-205; Rooms=9; GF=100%) is one of the gay-exclusive properties in South Beach. It continues to upgrade its rooms and public areas, with maintenance and service levels to meet the demands of discerning travelers who want to stay in a gay environment. The nine rooms at this B&B all have pool and garden views, and include CD players, down comforters, and aromatherapy toiletries. There is a complimentary breakfast and evening cocktail hour, and the guesthouse offers special packages for birthday stays and for couples celebrating an anniversary. The Jefferson is a solid, dependable choice that is a 10-15 minute walk from the heart of gay SoBe and the 12th Street beach. **The Kent** (1131 Collins Ave; 305/604-5068 or 800/688-7678, fax 305/531-; www.islandoutpost.com; High: \$145-350, Low: \$130-250; Suites: \$250-350; Rooms=54; GF=High) is known as a budget hotel that essentially helped jump-start the South Beach scene; it's now, more than ever, a top choice for good value on the beach. The **Leslie** (1244 Ocean Dr; 305/532-2676, fax 305/531-5543; www.lesliehotel.com; High: \$159-259, suites: \$275-350; Low: \$99-209; Suites: \$230-255; Rooms=43; GF=High) hotel reopened in 2001, restored to its bright, clean tropical decor after undergoing serious water damage in 1997. Although the rooms are small, they are cheery and well-priced. The clientele is often 50% gay, and the staff is very knowledgeable

about gay attractions and events. The all-suite **The Lily Guesthouse** (835 Collins Ave; 305/535-9900, fax 305/535-0077; www.lilyguesthouse.com; High: \$159-259, Low: \$99-209, ; Rooms=21; GF=High) offers limited front desk services, but the tasteful furnishings and appointments edge it into the Four Palm category. The rooms have coffee kitchens and marble bathrooms, and the public areas include a private sundeck and small courtyard. The hotel has a strong women's following, particularly among designer dykes and European femmes. **The Park Central** (640 Ocean Dr; 305/538-1611 or 800/727-5236, fax 305/534-7520; www.theparkcentral.com; High: \$185-350, Low: \$135-315; Rooms=127; GF=Med-High) This class act offers a distinctive Floridian atmosphere, with classic black and white photos adorning the walls, a small, heated swimming pool, a fitness studio, a fresh fruit and veggie juice bar and a rooftop garden deck. Professional desk staff, two-line voicemail phones and nightly turndown service round out the amenities. The Park Central attracts a predominantly straight crowd and guests report that staff can fling attitude at times. **The Richmond** (1757 Collins Ave; 305/538-2331 or 800/327-3163, fax 305/531-9021; www.richmondhotel.com; High: \$240-295, Low: \$165-195 Suites: \$350-420; Rooms=98; GF=Med-High) This recently-renovated Deco tower offers clean new rooms with light wood furniture, enlarged classic postcards adorning the walls and high-end amenities such as waffle robes and Neutrogena bath products. Continental breakfast is included; the classic Deco pool has a 12-man crescent-shaped spa and private beach access. The hotel is an IGLTA member. **Royal Hotel South Beach** (758 Washington Ave; 305/673-9009 or 888/394-6835, fax 305/673-9244; www.royalsouthbeach.com; High: \$130-240, Low: \$120-230; Rooms=42; GF=Med). This 42-room unit Deco jewel has been restored to its glitzy past, with modern touches, including cheerful colors, mod furniture, elegant details (marble interior, super-comfortable beds,) thoughtful amenities (refrigerators, CD players) and high-tech features. The staff is friendly and helpful. **The Savoy** (455 Ocean Dr; 305/532-0200 or 800/237-2869, fax 305/534-7436; www.savoymiami.com; High: \$195-399, Low: \$140-315; Rooms=68; GF=Med) This deluxe 2-acre resort is made up entirely of studio and 2-bedroom suites, each with a kitchen or kitchenette. It is directly on the beach, with two pools, a poolside gym and a very ritzy exterior. It looks like a definite Four Palm, and possible Five Palm, from what we could see. We've left it as a Four Palm until we're able to personally inspect the suites. The gay-exclusive **South Beach Villas** (1201-1215 West Ave; 305/673-9600 or 888/GAY-SOBE, fax 305/532-6200; www.southbeachvillas.com; info@gaymiamibeach.com; High: \$140-220, Low: 125-185; GF=High), continues to impress us. Sixteen units (equipped with large eat-in kitchen, private bath, TV and private phone) are large, bright and simply yet handsomely decorated (think high-end Pottery Barn). Poolside villas furnish views of the landscaped courtyard and pool area (partially exposed to nearby apartment buildings), which includes a large hot tub and barbeque. Although the location is only a few blocks further from the

beach than the Jefferson House (which, along with the Island House and the European Guest House, is one of the other gay-exclusive inns in town) it's a few blocks we wouldn't want to walk often, especially at night. A rental bike or small cab fare (about \$2.50 to the beach) will solve this problem for most visitors. **Surfcomber (DoubleTree)** (1717 Collins Ave; 305/532-7715 or 800/222-8733, fax 305/532-7280; www.surfcomber.com; High: \$90-130, Low: \$70-269; Rooms=185; GF=Low) has been totally upgraded and was the host of the 2001 Winter Party. Rooms are big and well-outfitted with the expected amenities in a business-class hotel. **The Wave Hotel** (350 Ocean Dr; 305/673-0401, fax 305/531-9385; www.wavehotel.com; Low: \$109-199, High:159-299) is a stylish remodel at the quieter, south end of the beach. Rooms are spacious, with comfortable, minimalist furniture and an array of amenities, from data port phones and CD radios, to touch lamps and wave sound machines. Service is solid, but could be snappier.

THREE PALM

The Abbey (300 21st St; 305/531-0031 or 888/61-ABBEY, fax 305/672-1663; www.abbeyhotel.com; High: \$135-175, Low: \$89-129; Rooms=50; GF=High) Newly remodeled, the rooms here rate at the top of the Three Palm category. The look is colorful, with a few sophisticated touches, but the furniture and decor strike a somewhat cheesy note: blue couches with gold stars and gold lamé pillows adorn the lobby. With advertisements in *Genre* and its selection as a host hotel for some gay parties, the place should draw a heavily gay crowd. Guests enjoy \$15 midweek access to the David Barton Gym and pool at Delano. **Avalon & Majestic Hotels** (700 Ocean Dr; 305/538-0133 or 800/290-7935, fax 305/534-0258; www.southbeachhotels.com; High: \$89-199, Low: \$79-159; Rooms=105; GF=Med-High) These two hotels are a block apart on Ocean, with a shared lobby in the Avalon. Rooms in the Avalon are larger and appointed in classic Deco style with cable TV, VCR and room safe. Furnishings are a bit worn; a European breakfast is included. **The Beachcomber** (1340 Collins Ave; 305/531-3755 or 888/305-HOTEL (305-4683); fax 305/673-8609; www.beachcombermiami.com, beachcomber@nassausuite.com; High: \$120-149, Low: \$75-119; Rooms=29, GF=Med-High) is an intimate hotel, bar and bistro with wood floors, pleasant pastel colors, modern decor and a casual, friendly atmosphere. The suites are very large, and rooms have refrigerators and a full range of toiletries. Management here also handles The **Bayliss** (500 14th St; 305/531-3488, fax: 305/531-4440; <http://www.thebayliss.com/>; riviere1@aol.com; \$60-80/night; \$260-340/week; \$700-800/month) and The **Nassau Suite Hotel** (1414 Collins Ave; 305/532-0043; 866/859-4177; fax: 305/534-3133; www.nassausuite.com; \$150-300), both of which are geared more towards long-term visitors, with cooking facilities, voicemail phones and weekly and monthly rates. Recently renovated, the **Bayliss** is the smallest of the three properties. Its rounded corners and glass-block details exude a real 1940s tropical Art Deco ambiance. The **Nassau's**

prices refer to studios and 1 bedrooms (both with kitchens). **The Beacon** (720 Ocean Dr; 305/674-8200 or 877/674-8200, fax 305/674-8976; www.beacon-hotel.com; High: \$165-295, Low: \$105-190; Rooms=79; GF=Med) underwent extensive renovations in the last couple of years. The building was gutted, and rooms now feature marble floors, wooden shutters and Balinese furniture. We've been unable to visit the hotel, so we provisionally award a 3-palm rating, although the descriptions we've heard may warrant a 4-palm rating. **Boulevard Hotel** (740 Ocean Dr; 305/532-0376, fax 305/674-8179; www.theboulevardhotel.com; \$95-575; Rooms=48; GF=Low-Med) This renovated Deco hotel has high-end K-Mart floral decor with some nice touches (Gilchrist & Soames toiletries, in-room safes) and some tacky ones (TV remotes are glued to the night stand). **The Breakwater** (940 Ocean Dr; 305/532-1220 or 800/454-1220, fax 305/532-4451; www.breakwater-hotel.com; High: \$105-145, Low: \$90-125; Suite: \$259-329; Rooms=59; GF=Med) Other than the Gilchrist & Soames toiletries, there is nothing distinctive about the interior of this oceanfront hotel. The very Deco street front is host to **Café Med**, which we have yet to visit, but its predecessor, hetero-popular Breakwater Cafe, registered in the minus column in our book. **Brigham Gardens** (1411 Collins Ave; 305/531-1331, fax 305/538-9898; www.brighamgardens.com; High: \$100-145, Low: \$70-110; Rooms=23, GF=Med-High) This women-owned garden guesthouse offers hotel rooms, studios and one-bedroom apartments with acceptable mix-and-match furniture and bright, Caribbean/floral decor. Some units have fully equipped kitchens. Well-behaved pets are welcome for a \$6.00 fee, and a number of them (dogs, cats and birds) live on the property. The charming, lush gardens and aviary are the nicest features. **The Chelsea Hotel** (944 Washington Ave; 305/534-4069, fax 305/672-6712; www.thehotelchelsea.com; High: \$245; Low: \$60 GF=Low-Med), once dingy and dying, has been updated (in 2001) with design reminiscent of the Orient (complete with bamboo floors, "floating" beds and slate bathrooms. During happy hour, enjoy free sake along with the other youthful, party-oriented guests. **Colony Hotel** (736 Ocean Dr; 305/673-0088 or 800/226-5669, fax 305/532-0762; www.colonyhotel-sobe.com High: \$130-220, Low: \$75-150; Rooms=36; GF=Low) Formerly a hot address on the beach, the Colony is past its prime. Rooms are clean and reasonably well maintained, but the industrial carpeting, ugly silk flowers and tiny TVs just don't make it. A renovation could restore its popularity, but until then, it's overpriced. **The Edison Hotel** (960 Ocean Dr; 305/531-2744 or 800/961-9076, fax 305/672-4153; www.edison-hotel.com; High: \$165-320, Low: \$89-290; Rooms=60; GF=Low) has been completely renovated since our last visit to South Beach. Edison is one of the few hotels on Ocean Drive with its own pool. Room amenities include tile floors, refrigerators, safes, hair dryers, irons and direct dial phones with data ports (ask for a room on the second floor if you need high-speed net access. Junio suites have CD players and VCRs. The clientele is mixed gay/straight. Most rooms have partial ocean views. The ground

floor hosts the new **Ocean's Ten** café, offering sidewalk and poolside drinks and dining, but we've yet to indulge. **The Governor** (435 21st St; 305/532-2100 or 800/542-0444, fax 305/532-9139; \$70-135), is a pleasant choice even though a bit off the beaten path. **The Hotel Shelley** (844 Collins Ave; 305/531-3341 or 800/414-0621, fax 305/672-4900; www.hotelshelley.com; High: \$150-200; Low: \$75-100) is another conveniently located, gut-and-fluff remodel, with comfortable rooms, tasteful décor and modern conveniences. Marble bathrooms are a step up from your typical Three Palm property. **Indian Creek Hotel** (2727 Indian Creek Dr; 305/531-2727 or 800/491-2772, fax 305/531-5651; www.indiancreekhotel.com; High: \$140-260, Low: \$79-260; Rooms=61; GF=Med-high) has a great lobby with an upscale-funky Deco-travel theme and a new pool and spacious grounds that recall Key West guesthouses. Unfortunately, the rooms are not particularly attractive, and the location at the corner of 28th street is not convenient to anything we found of interest. **Mermaid Guest House** (909 Collins Ave; 305/538-5324, fax 305/538-2822; Low: \$95-215; High: \$115-280; Rooms=9; GF=Med) is a funky hole-in-the-wall with charm for days. **Best Western Hotel** (formerly the Kenmore, 1050 Washington Ave; 305/674-1930 or 888/343-1930, fax 305/534-6591; High: \$145-155, Low: \$75-85; Rooms=137; GF=High) features tiled baths and woodsy furniture framed by pleasantly landscaped grounds ideal for a sunset glass of wine. A recent renovation added a fitness center and high-speed Internet access. **Ocean 5 Hotel** (436 Ocean Dr; 305/532-7093 or 877/666-0505, fax 305/534-7353; www.oceanfive.com; Low: \$75-125, High: 135-175; Rooms=62; GF=Med) After extensive renovation, this transformed 5th Street property is again open for business. A new name, a new restaurant (**Ocean Five Bistro**), an Italianate lobby and Italian flag give the place a unique character. Keith Haring posters hanging in some rooms ensure at least a medium gay factor rating. Some deluxe rooms feature marble floors and bathrooms and Mexican Colonial handcrafted furnishings. Others sport a breezy Art Deco look with lively colors and pretty linens. Free high-speed DSL connections and sound-proofed walls come with every room. There's no pool but the beach is just across the street. This property, though a little south of the gay beach, represents a good value for the money. **The Riande Continental** (1825 Collins Ave; 305/531-3503 or 800/RIANDE-1, fax 305/532-7689; www.hotelesriande.com; info@hotelesriande.com; High: \$95-140; Low: \$75-95, Rooms=250; GF=Low) This is the nicest of the big hotels above Lincoln Road that cater mostly to foreign tour groups. The pool is decent with a small lawn, and the decor is a bit more sedate and sophisticated than the Marseilles. It's an okay choice for those who don't mind the tour crowds. **The Ritz Plaza** (1701 Collins Ave; 305/534-3500 or 800/522-6400, fax 305/604-8605; www.ritzplaza.com; High: \$179-439, Low: \$149-329, Suites: \$299-899; Rooms=132; GF=Low) This Deco high-rise on the Collins strip has some style but the execution feels like the softer side of Sears. The pool, lawn and breakfast room are all very nice. In-room amenities include safes, coffee makers and refrigerators. **The**

Shelborne (1801 Collins Ave; 305/531-1271 or 800/327-8757, fax 305/531-2206; www.shelborne.com; High: \$175-250, Low: \$135-200, Suites: \$450-650; Rooms=225; GF=Med) The best thing about this hotel is the giant Deco S on its skyline name plaque and its classic pool. The lobby is also classic Deco, with dark wood and black lacquer furniture. Things go downhill from there – the hallways feature wainscoting, but fluorescent lights. The tiled baths are clean, but the room decor bears no resemblance to the hotel's Deco heritage – it's perfectly ordinary. This has less of a tour-group feel than the Riande Continental, however, and its inclusion in the Damron Guide pushes up its gay factor. **South Seas** (1751 Collins Ave; 305/538-1411 or 800/345-2678, fax 305/532-9477; www.southbeachhotel.com; High: \$115-165, Low: \$75-129; Rooms=117; GF=Low) This hotel has a clean, current feel to it, although the decor is basic mid-market floral. It's a step below its fancier neighbors in taste and sophistication, but still offers a lovely pool and beach access beyond. Voicemail and data-port phones are a plus, but bring your own shampoo. Continental Breakfast is included. **Villa Paradiso** (1415 Collins Ave; 305/532-0616, fax 305/673-5874; www.villaparadisohotel.com, paradiso@travelbase.com; High: \$100-165, Low: \$75-129; Rooms=17; GF=High) is much improved since our last visit, although the artwork still consists of laminated photos taped to the wall. All rooms have full kitchens, and the lush garden setting is very attractive. Free local calls are a rare treat for this town. At the **Waldorf Towers** (860 Ocean Dr; 305/531-7684 or 800/933-BEACH, fax 305/672-6836; www.waldorftowers.com; High: \$190-359, Low: \$140-279, Suite: \$119-229; Rooms=47; GF=Low-Med), the Florida floral decor is pleasant enough. "Deluxe doubles" (\$160-210) with two beds are a good deal for 3 people sharing. The lobby is home to the Waldorf Café, which can be a bit loud, and the Compass Market, a very convenient general store. **The Whitelaw Hotel** (808 Collins Ave; 305/398-7000 or 888/244-6023, fax 305/398-7010; www.whitelawhotel.com, whitelaw@southbeachgroup.com; \$175-195) is a trendy hotel and lounge promising "clean sheets, hot water, stiff drinks," and delivering that, and a lot more, but still in an all-white style reminiscent of "the standard" hotel in LA. Shag carpet, patent-leather and aluminum furnishings that remind us that fashion isn't always comfortable. The clean sheets, however, are Belgian, and the bathrooms are Four Palm caliber.

TWO PALM

Beach Plaza Hotel (1401 Collins Ave; 305/531-6421 or 800/395-9940, fax 305/534-0341; www.beachplazahotel.com; beachplaza@aol.com; High: \$139, Low: \$79, O&A: \$40-65; Rooms=55, GF=Med) This hotel volunteered a special discount to O&A readers. It has a decent lobby with an interesting, neon-lit ceiling. **The Betsy Ross Hotel** (1440 Ocean Dr; 305/531-3934, fax 305/531-5282; www.betsyrosshotel.com; High: \$160-350, Low: \$120-300;

Rooms=86; GF=Low-Med) This dingy faux-Colonial with a little pool has the feel of a hotel gone to seed while its owners wait for someone to buy it. For Two Palms, it's overpriced. It does have a fitness room and swimming pool, but during our last visit, hand-written signs adorned the walls and front desk. Betsy needs to put away the needle and thread, put on some protective eye wear, and really renovate the place. **Colours/The Mantell** (255 W 24th St; 305/532-9341, fax 305/534-0362 or 877/WEBOOK2; www.colours.net; High: \$99-159 Low: \$69-119; Rooms=20; GF=High) This is a residential condo property with 20 units in a hotel rental program, promoted by the gay firm Colours. Weekly rates are available. All units feature kitchenettes and tiled baths, but the decor and furnishings vary considerably, depending on the unit owners. It has a nicely landscaped topless-optional pool, and a little gym. The residential location is not very convenient for tourists, but this is a solid, consistent operation. **The Suites of Dorchester** (1850 Collins Ave; 305/538-7629 or 800/327-4739, fax 305/673-1006; www.suitesofdorchester.com; High: \$229-299 ; Low: \$159-199; Rooms=33; GF=Med) This medium-sized, all-suites hotel is across the street from the beach. All one-bedroom suites include full kitchens, entertainment centers, high-speed Internet access and voicemail phones. **The European Guest House** (721 Michigan Ave; 305/673-6665; fax 305/276-1911www.europeanguesthouse.com; \$89-179 all year Rooms=14; GF=100%) is a good choice for budget rooms in an all-gay property (the other all-gay places are Jefferson House, South Beach Villas, and Island House. Not all rooms have private bathrooms, but each comes with a refrigerator, ceiling fan and T.V. **The Island House** (1428 Collins Ave; 305/534-0547 or 800/382-2422, fax 305/865-2220; www.islandhousesouthbeach.com; insobe@bellsouth.net; High: \$59-149, Low: \$39-99; Rooms=21; GF=100%) hovers on the cusp between Two and Three Palms. (As close as November 2000's Florida election!) Improved service would push it into the Three-Palm category; in the meantime, it's the best-located of the gay-specific properties for nightlife, beach, restaurant, and gym access. **The Marseilles Hotel** (1741 Collins Ave; 305/538-5711 or 800/ 327-4739 fax 305/673-1006; www.marseilleshotel.com; High: \$155-229, Low: \$99-215; Rooms=115; GF=Low) This tour group hostelry strives for a Deco-Euro look. The property includes a pool, exercise studio, and high-speed Internet access, but the gay factor is low here. **Penguin Hotel** (1418 Ocean Dr; 305/534-9334 or 800/235-3296, Fax 305/604-0350; www.penguinhotel.com; High: \$160-250, Low: \$115-170; Rooms=44; GF=High) is a budget-priced Deco hotel with bad florescent lighting and depressing small rooms somewhat redeemed by renovated, tiled bathrooms. Ocean Front and Ocean Corner rooms at least have panorama windows bringing in good views and plenty of natural light, so request one of those if you can. At the time of our previous review, the staff here defined unprofessional as they chatted with their friends on the phone while we stood waiting for their attention; here's hoping they've improved since then. **The Front Porch Cafe**, a very gay-popular daytime eatery, occupies the lobby, porch and sidewalk,

elevating the gay-factor. The **Winterhaven** (1400 Ocean Dr; 305/531-5571 or 800/395-2322, Fax 305/538-3337; www.winterhavenhotelsobe.com; High: \$169-650, Low: \$109-500; Rooms=60, GF=High) Renovated since our last visit (although we've yet to visit since the overhaul), the Winterhaven is a popular choice for boys and girls on a budget. Clientele also includes a good number of foreign tourists. The new rooms are done in shades of soft green, cream, and ginger, and the baths now come packed with Gilchrist & Soames products.

ONE PALM

The Carlton (1433 Collins Ave; 305/538-5741 or 800/7-CARLTON, fax 305/534-6855; www.carltonmiamibeach.com; High: \$119-159, Low: \$75-115; Rooms=68; GF=Low) This Deco underwent a \$3.5 million renovation in 1999. It offers cooking facilities, guest laundry, and a medium-sized pool with a view of the free parking. **Claremont Hotel** (1700 Collins Ave; 305/538-4661, fax 305/538-9631; Around \$70-90; Rooms=79, GF=Low) With kitchenettes (b.y.o. All Clad), and weekly and monthly rates, this low rent hotel caters to a mostly long-stay Latin American clientele. You get what you pay for, but it is air conditioned and right across the street from Delano. **The Clevelander** (1020 Ocean Dr; 305/531-3485, fax 305/534-4707; High: \$140-250; Low: \$95-190; Rooms=60; GF=Low) This hotel is not well maintained, though it is not dirty. It is home to the South Beach Gym, open to hotel guests at a steep discount (50% off the \$15 daily rate), but also houses the Clevelander Bar, which is the loudest, biggest, most obnoxious hetero bar on the beach. **The Princess Ann Hotel** (920 Collins Ave; 305/534-2196; www.princessann.com; Low: \$99-140; High: \$129-195; GF=Low) Rooms have phones, microwaves, refrigerators, and color cable TV, and little else to recommend them. The Collins Avenue location is convenient, and the price is right, but the property is definitively One Palm. **South Beach Hotel** (236 21st St; 305/531-3464; crestgouphotels.com; \$40-75; Rooms=52; GF=Med) The rooms here are okay has okay rooms, probably Two Palm, but during our last visit, the hallways and lobby are really bad, with handwritten signs taped up everywhere, and a dingy patina that made us want to wash the soles of our shoes. *Out* magazine had some nice things to say about them, which (along with the nail polish on the desk clerk) accounts for the elevated gay factor. Their reporter must have visited in a different lifetime. **The Starlite Hotel** (750 Ocean Dr; 305/534-2161, fax 305/534-5364; www.starlitehotel.com; High: \$105-165, Low: \$79-99; Rooms=50; GF=Low) This family-owned and operated (fire Mom and hire a real staff) hotel is entered through a tacky clothing boutique and clothing store that serves as its lobby. Rooms do feature complete kitchens. They were unable to show us a room during our last visit, and not very responsive about sending us information. They're also one of the last places with aluminum chairs out front. They cater to an older (read: geriatric), straight clientele. **Tudor Hotel and Suites** (1111

Collins Ave; 305/534-2934 or 800/843-2934, fax 305/531-1874; www.southbeachtudor.com; High: \$159-565, Low: \$139-500; Rooms=92; GF=Low) This hotel had just changed hands at our last inspection, and judging from the parade of problems that we witnessed at the front desk, they were still working out the kinks. They were too overwhelmed to show us a room during our visit. Recent reports indicate the new owners have spruced the property up a bit (with a fresh coat of paint and some new furnishings) and added a café and gym, and the location is pretty good.

UNRATED

The **Bentley Hotel** (510 Ocean Dr; 305/538-1700 or 877/236-8510, fax 305/532-4865; www.thebentleyhotel.com; High: \$250-1200; Low: \$220-900; GF=Med) offers comfortable, modernly decorated and spacious rooms with kitchenettes, Internet access, and Italian marble bathrooms. The hotel features a rooftop pool and sundeck and is located in a prime Ocean Drive location. When reserving, be sure to ask for a room away from the hubbub along the Drive. **Aqua Hotel and Lounge** (1530 Collins Avenue; 305/538-4361, fax 305/673-8109; www.aquamiami.com; High \$125-345; Low: \$95-\$295; Rooms and suites = 50; GF=High) A stylish, affordable option only a block away from the beach, this hotel enjoys a fabulous location, very friendly staff, and a relatively low-key atmosphere. The stark but large rooms feature concrete and wood floors, a cordless phone, CD player, safe, mini-bar, web-TV, and a lava-lamp. There's no pool, but a large Jacuzzi, yoga classes, and a free breakfast in the lounge make up for it! Pets are welcome. At the **Loews Miami Beach Hotel** (1601 Collins Ave; 305/604-1601 or 800/235-6397, fax 305/531-8677; <http://www.loewshotels.com/hotels/miamibeach/default.asp>; High: from \$229; Low: from \$189 GF=will vary) the rooms are very nice and the amenities impressive, but there's no escaping the feel of a big convention property. The main beachfront tower includes 700 rooms. The 100-room 1939 St. Moritz building is where anyone with no kids would want to reserve. There is a large fitness center onsite. Jeffrey Sanker has blocked rooms here in the past for the **White Party**, trying to replicate his Palm Springs White Party resort experience. Other than those times when the hotel becomes party central, most gay travelers will feel more comfortable elsewhere. Located in the "South of 5th" area, **Hotel St. Augustine** (347 Washington Ave; 305/532-0570 or 800/310-7717, fax 305/532-8493; www.hotelstaugustine.com; \$185-225) is near the ocean, boutiques, restaurants and nightlife, but a good walk from the gay-popular 12th Street area and a cab ride from Lincoln Road. Still, the hotel provides an elegant, contemporary, light and airy environment, a welcome entertainment center, spacious bathrooms and a luxurious mini-spa. Gym bunnies can work out the nearby full-service X/S Health Club & Spa.

BEYOND SOUTH BEACH

Miami, Coral Gables and the more northerly shores of Miami Beach are home to a number of recommendable properties. None cater to the gay market, and none are particularly gay-friendly, but they do offer the full range of services and amenities that are not always available in the South Beach Hostelrys. The **Wyndham Grand Bay** (2669 South Bayshore Drive, Coconut Grove; 305/858-9600 or 800/327-2788, fax 305/859-2026; www.wyndham.com; High: \$359-400; Low: \$279-349) is the pinnacle of refined elegance and personal service, a celebrity favorite. **Doral Golf Resort and Spa** (4400 NW 87th Avenue, Miami; 305/592-2000 or 800/71-DORAL, fax 305/594-4682; <http://www.doralresort.com/>; High: \$270-990; Low: 150-580) is modeled after the Terme di Saturnia in Tuscany, and offers unparalleled fitness, golf, tennis and spa facilities, to a decidedly hetero crowd. **The Biltmore** (1200 Anastasia Avenue, Coral Gables; 305/445-1926 or 800/727-1926, fax 305/913-3159; www.Biltmorehotel.com; \$200-1600) is an ornate, Mediterranean-Moorish-Revival-style hotel (attracting the likes of President Clinton, no less) listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The spa and fitness center, and the 17,000-square-foot pool are prime attractions. The newest addition to the Rubell Hotels collection, the hip and reportedly gay-popular **Beach House Bal Harbor** (9449 Collins; 305/535-8600 or 8; fax 305/535-8602; www.rubellhotels.com/beach.html) features interiors designed by Ralph Lauren, a gym, and a poolside spa. The **Intercontinental Miami** (100 Chopin Plaza, Miami; 305/577-1000 or 800/327-3005, fax 305/577-0384; <http://miami.florida.intercontinental.com/index.shtml>; \$159-289) is the best of downtown's hotels, an imposing travertine tower on the Miami skyline. A couple of the hotel's most noteworthy features include superb views and a stunning 5-story atrium.

DINING

South Beach's restaurant scene is managing to keep in step with the feverish pace of restoration and renewal that is sweeping the area's hotels and shopping districts — seemingly matching every newly refurbished hotel with another hot new eatery. Almost without exception, the hot restaurants are struggling to fill the tall order of serving the latest in haute-trendy cuisine (any mixture of Pacific Rim/Brazilian/Caribbean food) to the haute-trendy clientele they depend on for continued popularity. Much of this cuisine is the culinary equivalent of runway fashion: flashy and fun, but lacking in substance and utility. At least it won't come back to haunt you like the ill-advised chemise in the back of your closet. Start your day with breakfast at the **Front Porch** (1418 Ocean Dr; 305/531-8300; \$5-11), attracting a very gay crowd for standard breakfast fare inside and out, on the porch and sidewalk in front of the Penguin hotel. The Front Porch is one of the

few primarily gay eateries on the Drive. **Spiga** (1228 Collins Ave at the Hotel Impala (see above); 305/534-0079; www.spigarestaurant.com; \$12-25) is one of our favorites for light Italian food, with an intimate atmosphere and really great homemade pastas. Great people watching and affordable menu selections combine to make a winning restaurant choice. **China Grill** (404 Washington Avenue, at 5th Street; 305/534-2211; from \$35/family style) is an epicenter of the straight celebrity dining scene. Like its Manhattan sibling, it serves Pacific Rim modern cuisine, and manages to be intimate despite its enormity. The dress and atmosphere tend to be dark New York chic. The always-open **News Café** (800 Ocean Dr; 305/538-6397; www.newscafe.com; \$9-17) is a good see-and-be-seen place. **Metro Kitchen + Bar** (at the Astor Hotel, 956 Washington Ave; 305/672-7217), now occupies the space formerly inhabited by Astor Place at the posh Astor Hotel. It serves modern American fare with Asian, French and Italian influences. **Big Pink** (157 Collins Ave; 305/532-4700; \$10-14; www.bigpinkrestaurant.com) is a fun burger-salad-pasta place across from Amnesia. **Nemo Restaurant** (100 Collins Avenue; 305/532-4550; www.nemorestaurant.com; \$26-30) feels like a chic Mediterranean port restaurant, serving an adventurous mix of surf and turf, and Pacific Rim and South American flavors abound. **Grillfish** (1444 Collins Ave; 305/538-9908; <http://www.grillfish.com/>; \$14-27) is part of a three-city chain (also Boston & D.C.), serving healthy grilled seafood (with simple side dishes, including corn on the cob or pasta) at affordable prices to a friendly, low-key crowd. Try their garlic mussels appetizer. The restaurant occupies an airy, well-decorated space and is never overly crowded. The **Colony Bistro** (736 Ocean Dr; 305/673-6776; \$17-25) is a popular restaurant in the Art-Deco Colony Hotel right on Ocean Drive. Off Ocean Drive, try **Escopazzo** (1311 Washington; 305/674-9450; <http://www.escopazzo.com/>; \$18-28) for Northern Italian. More proof to justify our love of Tides (see above) is **1220** (1220 Ocean Dr; 305/604-5130; \$20-30), a no-nonsense bistro serving pure, fresh, unpretentious cuisine. You cannot go wrong at 1220, especially if you finish the meal with one of the intensely flavored desserts. Famous foodie Emeril Lagasse will be opening **Emeril's South Beach** in the former location of The Gaucho Room at Loews Miami Beach Hotel (see above). This Miami outpost of the Emeril Empire will offer the usual surf and turf menu when it opens in Fall 2003. **Joe's Stone Crab** (11 Washington Ave; 305/673-0365; <http://www.joesstonecrab.com/>; \$10-30) is a venerable institution that takes no reservations and has limited hours during the summer. The stone crab is divine, but the wait can be hell. Equally difficult to get into is the Gloria Estefan-financed **Larios on the Beach** (820 Ocean Dr; 532-9577; \$8-20), serving good, inexpensive Cuban food. The **Blue Door** (at the Delano hotel, 1685 Collins Ave (see above); 305/674-6400; <http://www.ianschragerhotels.com/>; \$20-42) echoes the *Starck*-white minimalism of the Delano's interior, and its calming environment attracts an ultra-chic crowd, who nibbles on tropical-Asian fare such as "crêpe passion," a soufflé crêpe topped with passion-fruit mousse. One

bite, and you'll swear you're floating amidst the clouds and stars in heaven. Another hotel eatery, **Les Deux Fontaines** (at the Hotel Ocean, 1230 Ocean Drive; 305/672-7878, or 800/783-1725; fax 305/672-7665; <http://www.lesdeuxfontaines.com/ldf.html>; \$20-35) is less trendy but very popular, with excellent seafood and an extensive wine list. **Joia** (150 Ocean Dr; 305/674-8871; \$17-30; www.centurysouthbeach.com), in the Century Hotel (see above), serves Tuscan and seafood specialties in a tasteful setting. The service can dish attitude though. At these prices, **Pacific Time** (see below) is a much better bet. **Mark's** (1120 Collins Ave; 305/604-9050; \$20-30) at the Nash Hotel is superb, elegant and pricey, but it offers some of the best Mediterranean fare in town.

LINCOLN ROAD AREA RESTAURANTS

Many of the most popular restaurants are located along or near Lincoln Road. The best food in town can be still be found at **Pacific Time** (915 Lincoln Road; 305/534-5979;; \$18-34) which has been serving mouthwatering pan-Pacific cuisine (great seafood and duck) for years in a laid-back atmosphere. The presentation is exquisite and the food and service are excellent, but the portions are often small. **Balans** (1022 Lincoln Rd; 305/534-9191; www.balans.co.uk; \$9-19) is a popular and very gay restaurant on the Lincoln Road mall. Imported from London, the casual bistro serves a good, creative menu at very reasonable prices. **Yuca** (501 Lincoln Rd; 532-9822; <http://www.yuca.com/>; \$16-25) serves "New Cuban" cuisine at their South Beach location (the original Yuca was in Coral Gables), a sunny, expansive restaurant offering a sophisticated and inventive array of Caribbean and South American cuisine on prime people-watching territory. It's ideal for late-afternoon *tapas* and cocktails after a day at the beach, or *meriendas* (in-between meals snacks) served from 3-5 P.M. The interior design, with a striking Byzantine mosaic medallion at the entrance, reflects the cuisine. The mosaics, inlaid between the acid-stained Cuban tiles, were designed by Cuban/Italian artist Luciano Franchi de Alfaro III, famed designer of the South Beach palazzo of late clothing maven Gianni Versace. **South Beach Stone Crabs** (723 Lincoln Rd; <http://southbeachstonecrab.com/>; 888-299-CRAB; \$12-19) serves traditional stone crabs. It's expensive. **Sushi Siam** (647 Lincoln Rd; 305/672-7112; \$13-21) is one of the best spots for sushi and Thai food on the beach. With outside dining and music, Sushi Siam is busy every night and popular with local gays and lesbians. **Tiramesu** (721 Lincoln Rd; 305/532-4538; \$13-19), an Italian restaurant located next to the popular dance bar Score (see below), offers genuine homemade pasta and traditional Italian food in an upscale trattoria atmosphere in a professional, friendly manner. It's a great spot for watching the cute guys and girls strolling by. Also located next to Score and owned by the folks at Tiramesu, **Spris** (731 Lincoln Rd; 305/673-2020; \$7-11) is also very popular and a great option if you're looking for a more casual, lighter and less expensive alternative to big sister

Tiramisu next door. Spris serves a range of excellent Italian pizzas, sandwiches, salads and desserts. The **Lincoln Road Café** (941 Lincoln Rd; 305/538-8066; \$6-10) offers excellent, inexpensive Cuban food and outside seating. Very popular with the after-gym crowd, the restaurant serves healthful choices such as grilled breast of chicken with rice, black beans and plantains. Try the "tres leches" (three milks), a smooth, creamy and rich Latin cake. **Nexxt Café** (700 Lincoln Rd; 305/532-6643; \$6-14) is a very gay-popular and casual spot located in the heart of Lincoln Road, next to the rotary, and always crowded for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It's a great place to hang out for coffee and the incredible French pastries. Just off Lincoln Road, the **Icebox Café** (1657 Michigan Ave; 305/538-8448; \$11-17) is a hot hangout for truly mouthwatering desserts and potent coffee. Lunch, dinner and weekend brunch are served from limited menus, which change daily, and showcase the chef's culinary talent. Icebox is open until 1AM on Friday and Saturday nights and 11PM Sundays through Thursdays. Very hip and new to the restaurant scene here is **Barton G's** (1427 West Ave; 305/672-8881; www.bartong.com/restaurant), serving fancy seafood, meat and pasta in a style that seems to fuse Asian, Italian and French with down-home American comfort food.

RESTAURANTS A LITTLE FARTHER AWAY

In Miami's "upper Eastside," **Soyka** (5580 NE 4th Court; 305/759-3117; \$10-26), from the owner of News Café and the Van Dyke, is packed for lunch and dinner everyday, and the restaurant only takes reservations for parties of seven or more. An American bistro with traditional comfort-food favorites, Soyka's serves a mean flank steak with fries. In North Beach, check out **Lemon Twist** (908 71st St; 305/868-2075; \$9-17), a great restaurant owned by a very gay-friendly straight couple from France. The service is excellent as is the southern Mediterranean cuisine. Try the assorted cheese appetizer and enjoy a shot of Lemon Twist Vodka after dinner, on the house. Note: Many restaurants in the area automatically add a 15% gratuity to all checks.

NIGHTLIFE

South Beach is home to some of the hottest nightclubs in the world. Things swing five nights a week, with crowds of locals and tourists partying like it's 1999. The bar scene suffers a bit from the huge emphasis on clubs, dancing and partying, but you don't need a gay cruise bar to cruise in Miami. The cafés and bars along Lincoln Road and Ocean Drive create a near constant cocktail atmosphere.

No nightlife scene changes faster than the one in South Beach. Even the weekly bar rags have a hard time keeping up with the constantly changing venues. These were accurate at press time, which is only

slightly more useful than being accurate in 1990. Be sure to check the local nightlife magazines, which may have also changed by the time you arrive.

Crobar (at the Cameo Theater; 1445 Washington; 305/531-8225; www.crobarmiami.com) has a state-of-the-art sound system and friendly, competent management. **Level** (1235 Washington; 305/532-1525; www.levelnightclub.com; cover-\$15 before 10:30, \$20 after) Has four dance floors, nine bars, five distinctly designed rooms. A private entrance for the gay community is at the corner of 13th Street and Collins Avenue. Friday nights are the most gay popular. **Twist** (1057 Washington; 305/53-TWIST; www.twistsobe.com) remains uniformly popular before and after the peak dance club hours, and is a mainstay during the week. It features an expanded cruise bar, a small dance floor, pool table, and open-air porch upstairs. There is never a cover. The main bar/club is **Score** (727 Lincoln Rd; 305/535-1111) on the Lincoln Road Mall. The venue is very popular, really well designed and big with a clientele of more substance than the usual club boys. During the day and evening, some patrons idle the time away poring through books. The sidewalk seating area is popular for people watching, and while it's open late every night, we like it best for happy hour, and especially for Sunday Tea Dance, 6 PM -12 AM. The **Loading Zone** (1426A Alton Rd, behind Domino's and Subway; 305/531-5623) is a Levi/leather bar, marked only with a yellow neon arrow. One Tuesday per month is nude night. **PUMP!** (841 Washington Ave; 305/538-PUMP; <http://www.pumpsouthbeach.com/>) is the really hot after-hours club open 4AM Saturdays and Sundays. Many locals will turn in early and get up for Pump when others are going to breakfast or church. **Cactus Bar and Grill** (2041 Biscayne Blvd; 305/438-0662; www.thecactus.com), over the causeway, is a little bit of New Jersey brought south. The club attracts a very diverse clientele – guys from the beach, guys from the suburbs, guys who play pool, guys in suits – basically anyone with a car. It's a big club, best for Friday happy hour around 7 P.M. Here's a funky bar where you can sip and spin, or at least watch your clothes tumble and twirl: **Laundry Bar** (721 North Lincoln Lane; 305/531-7700; www.laundrybar.com), located behind Score, the hip Lincoln Road dance bar, allows patrons to imbibe a cocktail or two and chat with new or old acquaintances while their clothes come clean. Have a drink at the beautifully restored **Albion** (1650 James Ave at Lincoln Road; 305/913-1000), a wonderful, intimate space – perfect for a romantic pre- or post-dinner cocktail. Tip a glass at **Wish** (801 Collins Ave; 305/531-2222) at **the hotel** (formerly the Tiffany Hotel, see above), Todd Oldham's ode to fashion-conscious hipsters. **Cupid's Miami** (formerly Zipper's, 1060 NE 79th St; 305/756-2694) is an upscale male strip club. Catch dinner beforehand at gay-popular and currently very hot **Magnum Restaurant and Lounge** (709 NE 79th St; 305/ 757-3368), a piano bar, steakhouse, and cocktail lounge just down the street.

VENUES OF INTEREST TO WOMEN

Women have few nightlife options. There is a handful of lesbian promoters that throw themed events but without any real consistency. The best bet is to find what's happening in town via *She Magazine* or the club flyers that you'll always find at **New Concept Video** (1671 Meridian Ave; 305/674-1111). **Laundry Bar** (see above) hosts lesbian night every Thursday. Although predominantly popular with gay men, **Score** (see above) attracts some women.

THE SOBE CALENDAR

Miami hosts a number of cultural events and annual circuit parties, many of which benefit charitable causes. Our SoBe Calendar lists a few events that will give you an excuse to return to Miami throughout the year. For exact dates, see our online calendar at www.outandabout.com/calendar or www.planetout.com/travel.

NOVEMBER: WHITE PARTY WEEK (305/667-9296 ext. 44; 800/494-TIXS www.whiteparty.net) culminates at the internationally acclaimed White Party at Vizcaya on Sunday evening. Some 15,000 boys and girls all dressed in white descend on sizzling South Beach for a weeklong series of world-renowned AIDS fundraisers benefiting Care Resource. The schedule of events includes: the **Victory Party, Muscle Beach Party** (12th St. Beach; Sat), **Heat Wave Pool Party** and last, but not least, the **White Party** (Vizcaya; Sun).

JANUARY: ART DECO WEEKEND (305/672-2014; 305/672-4319; <http://www.mdpl.org/>) is an annual weekend of events celebrating Miami's rich Deco history.

MARCH: THE WINTER PARTY (305/572-1841; fax 305/572-1831 www.winterparty.com) includes a whole series (8 or 9) of dance parties. They take place from Thursday through Monday at indoor and outdoor venues all over South Beach. A women's dance party is usually planned. The main event takes place at Ocean and 14th Street on Sunday from noon to sunset, and all events benefit the Gay and Lesbian Foundation of South Florida. Make your room reservations early, and check the Web site for details as they become available.

APRIL/MAY: THE ANNUAL MIAMI GAY and LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL (305/534-9924; www.miamigaylesbianfilm.com) This ten-day festival features national and international films by, about and of interest to gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered individuals, as well as a number of lead-in events.]

MAY: AQUA GIRL (305/572-1841; www.glfsf.org) is the lesbian equivalent to the White Party. Hosted by the Gay and Lesbian Foundation of South Florida since 1999, the event comprises four days and nights of music, dancing, and parties across South Beach.

GET OUT OF THE HOUSE

The section of beach most popular for gays is at 12th Street. You can't miss it. Cruising the streets is one of the most popular outdoor

activities here, and you may want to rent a bicycle from **Cycles on the Beach** (713 5th Street). Golfers will be in their glory at the **Doral Golf Resort and Spa** (4400 NW 87th Avenue; 305/592-2000 or 800/713-6725; <http://www.doralresort.com/>), with five 18-hole courses and a par-3 executive course. The championship *Blue Monster* course is one of the most challenging in the state. Miami also has half a dozen public courses. Call **Tee Time** (305/669-9500), a 24-hour information line, or the **Parks and Recreation Departments** (Miami-Dade County: 305/755-7800; <http://www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/parks/>) for information. Miami also has no shortage of tennis courts. **Doral** (above), the **Fisher Island Club** (1 Fisher Island Drive, Fisher Island; 305/535-6000 or 800/537-3708; <http://www.fisherisland-florida.com/>) and the **Crandon Park International Tennis Center** (7300 Crandon Boulevard, Key Biscayne; 305/365-2300) are the most exclusive courts; public facilities are also available through the **Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation Department** (above). **The Fairchild Tropical Garden** (10901 Old Cutler Road, Coral Gables; 305/667-1651; <http://www.fairchildgarden.org/>) offers 83 acres of tropical and sub-tropical gardens and lakes. Tram rides and walking tours are available, but it is perhaps best enjoyed on a leisurely stroll. The garden is host to the International Mango Festival in July and the International Orchid Festival in April.

WORKOUT

If the scene on the sand (which resembles the Undergear catalog come to life) makes you feel somewhat deflated, you can catch a quick muscle pump at **Crunch** (formerly Club Body Tech, 1259 Washington; 305/674-8222; class hotline: 305/674-0247; www.crunch.com; day:\$25; week pass: \$88), very gay popular and offering discount passes available at most hotels and in the local Columbia FunMap, which is easy to pick up around town. The gym most popular with the locals is **Ironworks** (1676 Alton Rd [entrance is off the rear alley just off Lincoln Rd]; 305/531-4743; <http://www.southbeachironworks.com/>; day: \$15; \$5 on Wed. when with a member; 3-day pass: \$25; week pass: \$45). If you want to pump up with the local SoBe muscle boys or just want to experience the local flavor, Ironworks is worth the extra walk west. **Idol's Gym** (715 N. Lincoln Lane; 305/532-0089; day pass: \$10, 3-day pass: \$25; week pass: \$56) has a second location on the mainland at N. E. 55th Street next to gay-popular Soyka Restaurant. The E. 55th Street location serves the heavily gay-inhabited neighborhoods of Morningside and Belle Meade. **The David Barton Gym** (at Delano (see hotels); 305/673-2900) caters to the chicest gym bunny crowd. Be careful not to knock over the tastefully arranged vase of calla lilies.

SEE/DO

Most gay tourists in Miami confine their exploration to the Art Deco architecture and bikini-clad sights along Ocean Drive. But in case of rain or cold weather, you'll be glad to know there are a plenty of historical and cultural activities to enjoy in the area. **Vizcaya Museum and Gardens** (3251 S. Miami Ave; 305/250-9133; <http://www.vizcayamuseum.org/>) was the palatial estate of James Deerling, the International Harvester magnate, although it is better known today as the home of Thanksgiving's White Party (see above), a shining star on the gay party circuit. Built in 1916, the mansion is furnished with impressive antiques and artwork, and is set amidst 10 acres of formal gardens, including an orchid display garden; 34 of the 70 rooms are open to the public. The **Bass Museum of Art** (2121 Park Ave; 305/673-7530; <http://www.bassmuseum.org/>) is a modest-sized museum with a small but solid permanent collection. It is closed until November 2003 while it undergoes a major renovation and expansion spearheaded by architect Arata Isozaki, who also designed the Brooklyn Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. Also notable for its architecture, the **Miami Art Museum** (101 W. Flagler Street; 305/375-3000; www.miamiartmuseum.org) is part of the Metro-Dade Cultural Center, a huge Spanish-style complex designed by Philip Johnson. The museum emphasizes art of the Americas produced in this century. The **Wolfsonian-FIU Museum** (1001 Washington Avenue; 305/531-1001; www.wolfsonian.org) houses a 50,000-piece collection of Art Deco and Art Nouveau decorative and fine arts. The **Historical Museum of Southern Florida** (101 W. Flagler Street; 305/375-1492; <http://www.historical-museum.org/>) is also part of the Metro-Dade complex, chronicling the history of south Florida's settlement. Many Flipper episodes were filmed at **The Miami Seaquarium** (4400 Rickenbacker Causeway; 305/361-5705; <http://www.miamiseaquarium.com/>), which now hosts 15 live marine shows daily—featuring dolphins (yes, they still have one named Flipper), performing seals, and a killer whale named Lolita—plus a Swim with the Dolphins program. The **Jewish Museum of Florida** (301 Washington Ave; 305/672-5044; <http://www.jewishmuseum.com/>) celebrates over 230 years of the Florida Jewish experience with photos, documents and artifacts displayed in an Art Deco former synagogue. While you don't need to go out of your way to see SoBe's Art Deco buildings, if you want to learn about them, you can rent a self-paced audio tour from the **Art Deco Welcome Center** (1001 Ocean Dr; 305/672-2014; www.mdpl.org; \$10). The route can be covered in as little as an hour. You may also wish to catch a movie at the newly opened **Regal Theater** (1100 Lincoln Rd; 305/673-6766; www.regalcinemas.com), an 18-screen megaplex which often shows gay-themed films.

BEACHES

There are two beaches, one, Haulover Beach in North Miami, is a “naked beach”, and the other one is in South Beach. **Haulover Beach:** How to get there: Take I-95 and exit at 826 East. Go all the way to A1A, and then turn right heading south again for about another 1 1/2 miles. On your right you will see a sign saying “Welcome to Haulover State Beach”. Take the second entrance. There is a \$3.50 park entry fee. Once you have parked take the tunnel that goes under A1A and leads to the beach. When you enter the beach you will see a lifeguard tower. Gays go to the left and “straights” go to the right. **South Beach:** How to get there: Go to Ocean Drive (A1A) and 12th street. Enter in front of the **Palace Grill** (1200 Ocean Drive; 305/531-9077), a big gay hangout that hosts theme parties every week and where the boys and girls play volleyball. Good luck parking your car! This is perhaps the most popular beach of all, and it is also has the most attitude. If you are not into beaches that have “Muscle Mary’s,” i.e., boys with that top-heavy, pumped up, shaved body, bodybuilder look, then this beach is definitely not for you.

SHOP

The Lincoln Road pedestrian mall was renovated in early 1996, and is *the* place to ply your plastic. For swimsuits, sports and South Beach—emblazoned wear, you can’t do better than **Palm Produce** (657 Lincoln Rd; 305/534-3335). **Whittall & Schon** (1319 Washington Ave; 305/538-2606) has interesting, funky clothing, including racks of body-conscious tank tops in a variety of colors. Lesbian-owned **real.life.basic** (643 Lincoln Rd; 305/604-1984; www.reallifebasic.com) is as a great place to shop for all things kitchen related. It’s a great store that also offers cooking lessons. Think Williams & Sonoma but warmer and friendlier. Every other Sunday during high season, **Lincoln Mall Road** is transformed into a large, open-air flea market crammed full of gewgaws from the `20s through the `60s, and attracting a dedicated gay following. This is a good place to pick up tchotchkes and maybe even a mensch. Off the beaten path, **Lambda Passages** (7545 Biscayne Blvd; 305/754-6900; www.lambdapassages.com) sells books, DVDs, toys and other goodies. Two nearby shopping experiences are worth driving to, if you need to take a half-day off the beach. The **Bal Harbour Shops** (9700 Collins Ave; 305/866-0311; www.balharbourshops.com) is about 25 minutes north by car, and offers the world’s most elegant collection of shops, including Hermes, Zegna, Prada, Chanel, Armani, Versace, Dior – not to mention Saks and Neiman Marcus. At the other end of the spectrum, **Sawgrass Mills** (12801 W. Sunrise Blvd, Sunrise; 954/846-2300 or 800/FL-MILLS; www.sawgrassmillsmall.com) is the

world's largest outlet mall, about an hour away, although they offer a shuttle bus service for tourists. Clearance centers here for **Neiman Marcus** (Last Call) and **Saks** (Off 5th) sometimes have last season's Bal Harbour merchandise at big discounts.

GET SMART

Hot Spots (www.hotspotsmagazine.com) is the established local gay nightlife publication, listing current happenings and special events. It's free and available at most clubs and some shops. **She Magazine** (www.shemag.com), also available at many places including Whittall & Schon (above) and **New Concept Video** (1671 Meridien Ave; 305/674-1111) off Lincoln Road, is the monthly lesbian guide. **Scoop** and **TWN** can also be useful. **Wire** is a good publication for party ads, and **Pride** has a comprehensive list of things to do. **South Beach Magazine** (www.southbeach-usa.com) and **Ocean Drive Magazine** (www.oceandrive.com) are the local glossy lifestyle publications. The **South Beach Business Guild** (1657 Drexel Avenue; 305/534-4763) is the gay chamber of commerce. The **Gay/Lesbian Community Center** (1335 Alton Road; 305/531-3666) operates a drop-in center and can answer some questions by phone. General tourist information is available from the **Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau** (305/539-3000 or 800/933-8448; www.miamiandbeaches.com). The Web site www.TravelGayzette.com/miami.htm lists local gay businesses. The **Miami-Dade Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce** (305/534-3336; www.gogaymiami.com) offers general and gay-specific information, including a gay-specific brochure.

TAXI FARES

If you are arriving via Miami International Airport and taking a cab to your hotel or host's home, you should know that **taxi fares** from (and to) the airport are flat-rate based on zones. A taxi to the zone including South Beach (all the way north to 64th St) in Zone 4 is \$24 (includes tolls and surcharge). Gratuity is not included and given the low quality of taxi service generally prevalent in Miami-Dade County, you won't feel much like tipping. Other zones: Normandy Shores north of 64th St: \$29; Coral Gables: \$11- 16; Key Biscayne: \$31; Surfside & Bal Harbor: \$34; Sunny Isles & Golden Beach: \$41.

BE COOL

Despite the pervasively sultry and gay-friendly atmosphere, don't continue or consummate dance floor romance on the beach. It is closed at night, and the police use infrared surveillance equipment to control drug related and other illegal activity.

WANT MORE?

This TravelGuide is just the tip of the editorial iceberg. We have over 170 other products, including loads of other TravelGuides, 3-Day TravelGuides (a fabulous gay weekend in the world's most gay popular destinations), TravelGuide+'s (larger guides grouped around a particular theme, like Sex & Travel and Gay Europe) and *OUT&ABOUT* Collection publications (gay travel-related books and guides by *OUT&ABOUT*-recommended authors). These guides are listed below and on the following page and are available at www.outandabout.com.

3-Day TravelGuides

- Amsterdam
- Barcelona
- Berlin
- London
- Madrid
- New Orleans
- New York City
- Paris
- Rome
- San Francisco

TravelGuide+

- Bear Travel
- Circuit Party Guide
- Gay Culinary Travel
- Gay Europe
- Gay Summer Resorts
- Gay Winter Resorts
- Nude Travel
- Sex & Travel
- Vacations for Gay Couples
- Vacations for One
- Women's Vacations

TravelGuides

- Albuquerque
- America's Best...
- Amsterdam
- Argentina
- Aspen
- Atlanta
- Austin
- Australia
- Bali, Indonesia
- Baltimore
- Barcelona
- Berlin & Munich
- Birmingham, Blackpool and beyond
- Boston
- Boston Suburbs
- Brazil: Rio & Beyond
- Brighton & Bournemouth
- Brussels & Antwerp
- Budapest
- Cambodia & Vietnam
- Caribbean
- Charleston
- Chicago
- Cincinnati, Cleveland & Columbus
- Cologne (Köln)
- Copenhagen
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Dallas/Ft. Worth
- Denver
- Detroit
- Dresden
- Dublin, Belfast and the Countryside
- Eureka Springs
- Fire Island
- Flagstaff & Sedona
- Florence
- Florida's West Coast
- Frankfurt
- French Countryside
- Ft. Lauderdale
- Gay Asia
- Gay Mediterranean: Ibiza, Sitges & Mykonos
- Gay Skiing
- Glasgow, Edinburgh & Dundee
- Gran Canaria
- Greece
- Guatemala
- Hamburg/Sylt
- Hawaii
- Helsinki
- Hong Kong
- Houston
- Iceland
- India
- Indianapolis

TravelGuides (continued)

- Israel
- Italian Cities
- Kansas City
- Key West
- Krakow
- Kyoto
- Laguna Beach & Long Beach
- Lake Tahoe
- Las Vegas
- Latvia: Riga
- Lisbon & the Azores
- Lombardy & Emilia-Romagna
- London
- Los Angeles
- Louisville & Lexington
- Lyon
- Madison
- Madrid
- Manchester
- Martha's Vineyard
- Memphis
- Mendocino, Palo Alto & Santa Cruz
- Mexican Resorts
- Mexico City and Cuernavaca
- Miami (South Beach)
- Minneapolis/St. Paul
- Mobile
- Montreal & Quebec
- Morocco
- Naples, Sarasota and beyond
- Nashville
- New Haven
- New Orleans
- New York City
- New Zealand
- Newfoundland & Labrador
- Northampton
- Ogunquit
- Oklahoma City
- Orlando
- Oslo
- Out on Tour
- Palm Springs
- Paris
- Philadelphia
- Phoenix
- Pittsburgh
- Portland (Maine)
- Portland Oregon
- Providence
- Provincetown
- Puerto Rico & the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Quito
- Rehoboth Beach
- Rome
- Russia
- Russian River
- Salt Lake City
- San Antonio
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Fe & Taos
- Santiago
- Savannah
- Seattle
- Seoul
- Sonoma County
- South Africa
- St. Louis
- Stockholm
- Switzerland
- Sydney (Mini-Guide)
- Syria & Jordan
- Taipei
- Tallinn
- Thailand
- Tokyo
- Toronto/Niagara Falls
- Tucson
- Turkey
- Vancouver & Victoria
- Venezuela
- Venice
- Vermont
- Vienna, Budapest & Prague
- Washington, D.C.

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