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■ NEIGHBORHOODS

SOUTH BEACH, reputed to be one of the most glamorous places in the Miami area, is easily accessible from downtown. Built up in the early 1930s as a place for Northerners to escape the cold winters and the Great Depression, South Miami Beach (know as South Beach or SoBe) is a 23-block area on the southern tip of Miami Beach. The architecture is intentionally whimsical—a collage of Art Deco, streamlined Modern, and Spanish Mediterranean—revival styles adapted to the South Florida climate. Of the famous **Art Deco Historic District** Leicester Hemingway writes: “[when] people needed to let go...they became wild on Miami Beach...they didn’t watch their nickels. You would think nothing of ordering something you couldn’t pay for because you’d figure, ‘Maybe they’ll carry me or maybe I’ll wash dishes.’ Architects were determined not to use any older styles like the Spanish...they didn’t quite know where they were headed; but they wanted something modern, so they smoothed out all the Spanish things. They smoothed the balconies, they smoothed everything until you got the feeling that life was smooth. The buildings made you feel all clean and new and excited and happy to be here.”

People are still happy to be here, as much for the glamorous people-watching as for the architecture. Whether sitting at a chic sidewalk café is your pleasure, or roller-blading down Ocean Avenue to watch the sunset, South Beach is a must. (For tours, and information on the Art Deco District call 305-672-2014).

BAYSIDE MARKETPLACE, a colorful, attractive network of stores, restaurants, and bazaars on Biscayne Bay, is within easy walking distance of the hotel. Fun for the whole family, this tropical indoor/outdoor mall teems with stalls offering wares of various kinds, and national chains include Brookstone, Victoria’s Secret, The Limited, and The Gap. Bayside is easy to find, safe and clean, with plenty of sheltered, if

slightly costly, parking. Sunset cruises around the bay are also available from Bayside.

COCONUT GROVE, Miami’s former Bohemian quarter, is today a cosmopolitan mix of expensive shops, trendy bars and restaurants, sidewalk cafés, and upscale galleries and boutiques. Although not as outrageous as South Beach, Coconut Grove offers people-watchers a good dose, and for those who prefer the company of trees, the Grove’s giant ficus tempt the possibility of a green thought in a tropical shade.

CORAL GABLES has a concentration of the best restaurants in Miami and is an affordable taxi ride from downtown if 4-5 people share. One of America’s first planned communities, Coral Gables is a fascinating



Above, The New Yorker Hotel in the heart of the Art Deco District

town filled with gorgeous, Mediterranean-style homes, manicured lawns, and lush foliage. The layout, however, resembles a maze, with street names in Spanish written on small white stones at ground level that are hard to read. As a result, it’s easy to get lost. For people inclined to wander, though, this classy old neighborhood is perfect for exploration by foot or bicycle.

■ OUTDOOR PLACES

KEY BISCAYNE, off the Rickenbacker Causeway between Miami and Miami Beach, is where the rich folk live. It also has some of the best beaches in the Miami area—most of which are open to the public. On the five-mile-long causeway that links the Keys, visitors can pull over, park, and rent sailboats or jet skis for zooming around the placid waters of Biscayne Bay.

BISCAYNE BAY

Sight-seeing cruises of various kinds leave every hour from Bayside Marketplace for one-hour excursions around placid Biscayne Bay. Most spectacular of these is the sailing tour on an 85-foot topsail schooner, the Heritage of Miami II. Two-hour sails depart at 1:30 p.m., 4 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. daily. The cost is \$12 for adults and \$7 for children under 12. One-hour sails depart on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at various times. Call ahead for specific schedules on weekends. The price is \$7 per person. For more information call 305-442-9697.

VIZCAYA Museum and Gardens, one of South Florida’s majestic treasures, is the site of this year’s Opening Reception. Built by American industrialist James Deering in 1916 as a winter home, Vizcaya was designed to reflect 400 years of European history. Deering wanted the house to resemble a 16th-century Italian estate that had been occupied and renovated by several generations of a family during that time. Not surprisingly, and with every detail in mind, it took more than 1,000 workers over two years to complete. Of equal splendor are the formal gardens that combine to awesome effect the elements of 16th- and 17th-century Italian hill gardens with those of 17th-century France.

Now a National Historic Landmark and museum of the European decorative arts, Vizcaya provides a unique experience for visitors wanting to retreat into another world. For those who can’t make the Opening Reception on Thursday evening, tickets and information are available by calling 305-250-9133.

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL GARDEN, just south of Miami, has one of the world’s finest and largest collections of palms and cycads. Visitors can follow the winding paths around 83 acres of colorful tropical flowers and massive trees, lakes, lily pools, overlooks and vistas. Fairchild Tropical Garden is located at 10901 Old Cutler Road, in Coral Gables, and is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults, free for children under 12, and includes a narrated tram tour offered hourly, plus admission to the conservatory and Gate House Museum at no additional charge. Fairchild Tropical Garden is accessible to people with disabilities. For more information call 305-667-1651.

MIAMI METROZOO is about 25 minutes south of downtown Miami. It’s a ZOO. It has all kinds of fabulous animals. The kids’ll love it. Open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information call 305-251-0400. For information on bus service call Metro-Dade Transit at 305-638-6700.

MIAMI SEAQUARIUM is located just 10 minutes from downtown Miami off of the Rickenbacker Causeway on Virginia Key. Attractions include the usual array of leaping dolphins and killer whales, divers feeding sharks and reef fishes, and much more. Be