

Florida's star attraction

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Glass discovers the sophisticated elegance of The Palm Beaches, Florida



• Exterior of The Colony

I've arrived in The Palm Beaches, where an aura of bygone sophistication still hangs in the warm air. This fashionable Floridian destination has been a playground for the rich and famous for many years, where a luxurious and colourful vibe permeates every paving stone (difficult to capture on Instagram). A 90-minute drive from Miami Airport, this golden enclave comprises 47 miles of beaches, where sunny afternoons melt into balmy nights.

The story of The Palm Beaches started with American industrialist Henry M. Flagler, who arrived here in 1883 to spend his honeymoon. Recognising its potential as a winter holiday destination which could attract guests from out-of-state, he began to buy land and he built a railroad, which in 1885 became part of the Florida East Coast Railway. Today, Flagler's palatial former Palm Beach home, Whitehall, is the Flagler Museum. It provides an insight into America's gilded age and how the American elite began to spend their winters as 'snowbirds' by avoiding the inclement weather along the East

Coast to vacation in The Palm Beaches.

I'm reminded of the glittering past as I check in to The Colony Hotel, with its baby-pink façade and palm trees hovering over the driveway. In the 1950s it was the winter residence to the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, who had a suite named after them. Frequent guests included US presidents and stars of screen and stage, including Frank Sinatra and Judy Garland. The Colony is adjacent to the designer boutiques on Worth Avenue, a street established by Addison Mizner, the eccentric American architect who successfully created this upmarket shopping destination with Moorish Mediterranean-style architecture he had seen on his travels to Central America and Southern Europe.

I take a short drive two the Royal Poinciana Plaza, where I have booked a table for lunch at Sant Ambroeus. The tagliatelle alla bolognese and vitello tonnato live up to their reputation in this lively new branch of the notable Milanese restaurant, where Italian staff converse in their native language while

extending their inimitable brand of hospitality. Afterwards, I continue my retail therapy exploring the Plaza's generous courtyard, surrounded by eclectic boutiques majoring in pastel-coloured clothing and homeware which reflect the local laid-back yet lavish lifestyle.

In the afternoon I head to one of the star attractions in West Palm Beach, The Norton Museum of Art, which recently completed a major expansion designed by Norman Foster, brings together an inspiring collection of international art and artefacts from across generations. After heading back on myself to gaze one last time at the dazzling Dale Chihuly glass ceiling, I opt to remain at the museum for an early dinner at the Leonard and Evelyn Lauder Restaurant, where I dine al fresco on the garden terrace.

Next morning I take a drive to the Jupiter Lighthouse, dating back to 1853, where I can feel the history as I walk up the original narrow black staircase. The steep climb proves worthwhile as soon as I observe the views across

the inter-coastal waterway with the superyachts docking beside the recently opened waterfront restaurant, 1000 North – one of the most renowned restaurants in Florida and my lunchtime destination.

I spend my final couple of days relaxing at the ocean-front Eau Palm Beach Resort and Spa, once the social club of the Rockefeller and Vanderbilt families and now a sprawling 309-room retreat. Despite the palatial grandeur of the lobby's columns and crystal chandeliers sparkling in the sunlight, I am struck by the casual ambience of the resort. My suite is decorated in shades of lemon and blue, reflecting the view from my balcony, from where I can almost touch the beach. As darkness falls, I head onto the sand to witness the endangered loggerhead turtle hatchlings scramble into the sea, and I hear how the resort has teamed up with a charitable organisation, the Loggerhead Marine Life Centre, to rehabilitate injured turtles.

My final morning I'm spoilt at the resort's Eau Spa, where I indulge in

an invigorating muscle-pummelling massage, after which I drift off to sleep on a heated bed, before soaking in the steamy relaxation pool. I enjoy my final lunch al fresco in the sunshine at the beachside eatery, Breeze Open Kitchen, where I order a bespoke tuna-club sandwich, washed down with an icy-cold strawberry margarita.

As I soak up the sun one final time, I reflect on all the experiences I have enjoyed which have made my week in The Palm Beaches utterly magical ☺

One night at Eau Palm Beach starts from \$339/night from now until October 31, 2020. For more information or to make reservations, please visit:

www.eaupalmbeach.com

One night at The Colony starts from \$220/night from now until September 2020. For more information or to make reservations, please visit:

www.thecolonypalmbeach.com

For more information on Discover The Palm Beaches please visit:

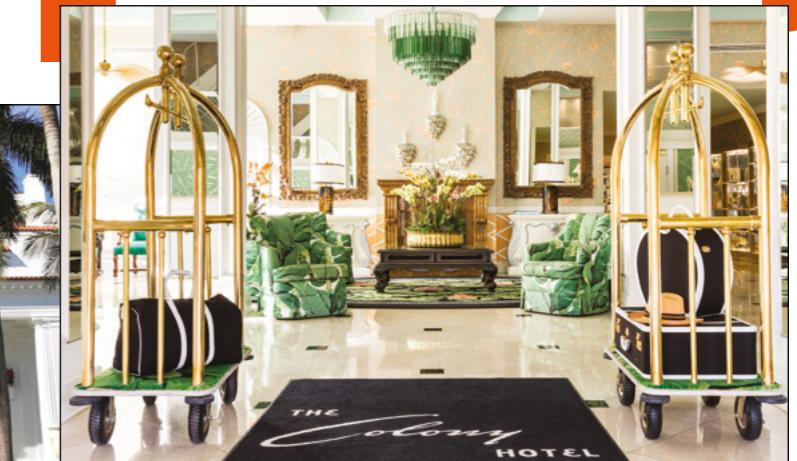
www.thepalmbeaches.com



• Arial view of Eau Palm Beach



• The Flagler Museum



• Lobby of The Colony