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## WHAT'S NEW IN GREATER MIAMI AND THE BEACHES

MIAMI (January 2006) – Greater Miami is on track for a record tourism year in terms of occupancy and room rate. From January through November 2005, the destination experienced average hotel occupancy of 72.8%, a 6.4% jump over the same period last year. The average room rate for the same period was \$127.29, an increase of 11.4% over last year. With its peak season now under way, the Greater Miami visitor industry has announced the following updates:

### HOTEL HAPPENINGS

**The Biltmore** in Coral Gables has unveiled its elegant new \$2.5 million **Biltmore Spa**, located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the hotel. The 12,000 sq. ft. spa offers an array of body treatments and services in a luxurious and sophisticated resort setting. Suites for couples and picturesque views from soaring windows are among the distinctive features of the new facility, which also encompasses a full-service salon and spa boutique. Half-day and specialty packages are available, as are select treatments in the hotel's private poolside cabanas, which recently underwent a \$200,000 refurbishment. Set amidst lush landscaping of Canary palms, bougainvillea and hibiscus are two styles of cabanas – suites accommodating 4-8 persons and deluxe cabanas for 2-4 persons. The posh décor includes teak lounges and loveseats, serving credenza and sun chaises. Individual outdoor rain showers, scented candles, banana leaf ceiling fans, orchid plants, terry robes and towels, fresh fruit and privacy drapes lend a special touch to the romantic ambiance. Flat screen TVs and laptops are available for rental upon request. For more information, visit [www.biltmorehotel.com](http://www.biltmorehotel.com).

On December 16, 2005, trendy hotel guru Andre Balazs opened one of the hottest boutique hotel brands in the United States on the glamorous Venetian Causeway in Miami Beach – the **Standard Miami**. This spa hotel opened after a multimillion dollar renovation of the Lido Spa. Property features include: Wholesome food restaurant with bayside grill and lounge, a boutique with necessary supplies, outdoor yoga lawns, garden fire lounge, waterfall hot tub, high water massage, huge sound pool (featuring underwater music), an arctic plunge, treatment rooms, mud lounge, sunset waterfront yoga, outdoor showers, hamam, classic cedar sauna, aroma steam room, wall of sound showers, adult scotch hose, gym with trainers, Pilates, natural skin care clinic, naturopathic clinic, nutrition counseling, acupuncture workshops, lectures, guided

retreats, therapists and healers as well as a full array of spa treatments. For more information, visit [www.standardhotel.com](http://www.standardhotel.com).

Asia Pacific's leading luxury hotel group, Shangri-La, has announced it will open a 147-room hotel in Miami in 2008. Situated on Biscayne Bay, the new **Shangri-La Hotel, Miami** will be part of a \$480 million mixed-use Island Gardens project. The hotel project will also include a 50-slip "super-yacht" harbor. For more information, visit [www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com).

Florida's biggest condo developer, The Related Group, plans to bring a hip West Coast hotel to Brickell Avenue, where steep competition for well-heeled business travelers already exists. The new 129-room **Viceroy** at Icon Brickell will create a new niche by catering to younger, stylish executives eager for South Beach chic in the city's premier financial district. The Related Group signed a \$94 million contract for the 598-room Sheraton Biscayne Bay on Brickell, which will be demolished to make way for the Icon Brickell residential complex. One of the three Icon towers will be named the Viceroy Resorts and Residences, and will have a rooftop pool and lounge on the 50th floor, a luxury spa and elegant interiors. Ninety of the 129 Viceroy rooms in the tower will be sold as condo-hotel units. The condo hotel will be the first East Coast property for Viceroy and will be operated by the Kor Hotel Group.

The **Regent South Beach**, situated between Ocean Drive and Collins Avenue, is gearing up for its grand arrival this spring. Every one of the hotel's 80 guest suites will have its own sprawling balcony, measuring up to 350 sq. ft. and lavishly outfitted for entertaining with friends. The 27 penthouse balconies will all hold spiral staircases up to their own rooftop terraces, studded with Roman hot tubs, wet bars, a Bose surround sound stereo system, lush landscaping and adjustable, remote-controlled awnings. Inside, guest suites gleam with modern chic, from Anichini linens to personal espresso machines. Table 8 South Beach will be the hotel's signature restaurant and lounge. (See details below.) Room service options include a lavish en-suite dining menu, including the "Chef's Dinner," served in the privacy of the guest's suite. Chef Govind Armstrong will personally serve a customized feast, complemented by a tailored entertainment program designed by Sony Music artist Paul Oakenfold. For more information, visit [www.regenthotels.com](http://www.regenthotels.com).

The **Carlton Hotel** on Collins Avenue in South Beach completed a \$10 million full renovation in January 2006. Additions include a vibrant new lobby bar, sidewalk café and complete room renovations. All rooms have been upgraded and now include luxury amenities at an economical price. For more information, visit [www.carltonsouthbeach.com](http://www.carltonsouthbeach.com)

**Mayfair Hotel and Spa** in Coconut Grove, just fifteen minutes from Miami International Airport, completed a \$10 million renovation. New additions include a nature-based spa, a new restaurant and bar, and new décor and amenities in the hotel's 179 suites, including 42" plasma flat screen TVs, CD/DVD players, Wi-Fi and more. The hotel will open its rooftop swimming pool in July 2006. For more information, visit [www.mayfairhotelandspa.com](http://www.mayfairhotelandspa.com)

The new 36-story all-suite **Fontainebleau Tower** opened in 2005, adding 460 studio suites, one-bedroom suites and two-bedroom suites to the world-famous Miami Beach oceanfront destination resort. Fontainebleau Tower is a four-star quality hotel with superior furnishings and amenities. The studio suites are 500 sq. ft. and include a kitchenette. The one-bedroom suites are 1,000 sq. ft. and include a full kitchen, plus washer/dryer. The two-bedroom suites include both units plus a connecting entry foyer. Fontainebleau Tower is the perfect location for nightly, weekly or extended stays. Reservations can be made online at [www.fontainebleau.com](http://www.fontainebleau.com) or by calling 1-800-548-8886.

To celebrate the 18th anniversary of the restoration of the famed **Park Central Hotel**, the hotel is offering **room rates rolled back to \$1.00 per night, reflecting rates in 1937, the year the hotel originally opened.** Designed by master architect Henry Hohausser, the hotel during its heyday was a favorite Miami Beach destination for Hollywood royalty including Clark Gable, Carol Lombard and Rita Hayworth. In 1985, urban developer and preservationist Tony Goldman, of Goldman Properties, fresh from reinventing Manhattan's Soho, discovered Miami Beach's Art Deco District, recognized its potential as America's Riviera and acquired 18 properties, adding one property per month to his portfolio. Though he went on to develop much of the Art Deco District's fashionable infrastructure, he chose this beachfront gem as his first Miami Beach renovation project. Honoring its original grace and style and respecting its unique history, he opened the doors to the faithfully restored Park Central in 1987. Monthly winners of the roll back rate will be selected January to December 2006, via a drawing. Participants may access contest forms at [www.theparkcentral.com](http://www.theparkcentral.com). For more information, call 305-538-1611.

The newly renovated and reopened **Catalina Hotel & Beach Club** recently opened a new restaurant called **Spy Lounge**. The restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as late-night tapas for hotel patrons and local socialites who want to enjoy the nightly DJ who spins until 2 a.m. For information, visit [www.catalinahotel.com](http://www.catalinahotel.com).

Situated in the sizzling pulse of South Beach, the Loews Miami Beach Hotel will be welcoming the \$10 million, 15,000 sq. ft. **Elemis Spa** in December 2006. For more information, visit [www.loewshotels.com/hotels/miamibeach](http://www.loewshotels.com/hotels/miamibeach).

**Eden Roc Resort**, the legendary Morris Lapidus creation, officially opened its doors on December 20, 1955, but will be celebrating the hotel's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary throughout 2006. The Golden Anniversary celebration will kick off with a star-studded gala on January 14. For more information, visit [www.edenroccresort.com](http://www.edenroccresort.com).

The **Trump International Sonesta Beach Resort** in Sunny Isles Beach will open two new tennis courts and a lap pool overlooking the beach by the end of January 2006. For more information, visit [www.sonesta.com](http://www.sonesta.com).

Sol Meliá is managing the Royal Palm Hotel in South Beach. The hotel has undergone a multimillion dollar refurbishment completed at the end of 2005, and is now branded as **Meliá Royal Palm**. This oceanfront resort is located in Miami Beach on 1545 Collins Avenue in the heart of South Beach. For more information, visit [www.solmelia.com](http://www.solmelia.com).

**Nassau Suite Hotel**, an historic building in the heart of South Beach, has completed a \$300,000 renovation of its 22 fully equipped apartments. The project was designed by architect Julien Bergier. For more information, visit [www.nassausuite.com](http://www.nassausuite.com).

The **Indian Creek Hotel** was recently taken over by the New York Inns Hotel Group. The property is equipped with Wi-Fi high-speed broadband wireless Internet access, as well as new furniture and hardwood floors. For more information, visit [www.indiancreekhotel.com](http://www.indiancreekhotel.com).

The **Holiday Inn Miami International Airport Hotel** is nearing completion of a \$3 million renovation, which included the installation of new wall and floor coverings throughout the entire hotel, remodeling and upgrading of the furniture and fixtures for all 218 guest rooms and baths, the modernization of all elevators, and the remodeling of all public spaces, the restaurant and meeting rooms. High-speed Internet service has been installed in all guest rooms and public areas. For more information, visit [www.holiday-inn.com/mia-intlapt](http://www.holiday-inn.com/mia-intlapt).

The City of Miami Beach Historical Preservation and Planning Boards recently unanimously approved the construction of the "Charles Garage Building," a 246,692 square feet multi-use five-story building being developed by Fru Management Inc. at Collins Avenue and 43rd Street for **Charles Group Hotels Inc.**

### **COOL CUISINE AND NIGHT LIFE**

Slated to open in January/February 2006 and located beachside at the new Regent South Beach, **Table 8 South Beach** will feature the acclaimed California-style cuisine of **celebrity chef Govind Armstrong** (34), a charismatic culinair who launched his career at Wolfgang Puck's legendary LA restaurant, Spago. At the South Beach location, Armstrong will serve his innovative cuisine – straightforward, simple food created with the freshest, natural products and local ingredients – while tapping the region's rich cornucopia of fish, fruits and vegetables to create an exciting new South Florida dining destination. Possessing a distinctly relaxed yet sophisticated ambiance, equal parts L.A. glam and South Beach chic, the restaurant will encompass a main dining room (seating 160), a private dining room (seating 40) and a wine room, which will seat 15 and no doubt become one of South Beach's most sought after private event spaces. A 40-seat lounge, dramatically situated beneath the Regent's glass-bottom pool, will be the perfect place to sip cocktails, see and be seen and sample the small plate lounge menu. For more information, visit [www.table8southbeach.com](http://www.table8southbeach.com).

**Karu & Y** is scheduled to open in March 2006 in the heart of downtown Miami's Design District with its burgeoning arts and entertainment scene. The enormous 26,000 sq. ft. space encompasses **Karu**, an upscale restaurant, **Y**, an opulent ultralounge and **Tottem**, a state-of-the-art special event/entertainment venue and is expected to create a sensational destination in this evolving district. The modern design, menu and other key elements for the \$15 million project are being formulated by entrepreneurial proprietor **Cesar Sotomayor** of Arrso Restaurant Company. The jet-setting Brazilian has chosen

Miami's top designers, artists and artisans to work on the project to create a sexy, modern restaurant and lounge that overflows with contemporary style, sensibility and ambiance. For more information, call 305-403-7850.

**Afterglo**, a new four-star restaurant by Tim Hogle, owner of South Beach's white-hot **Tantra** Restaurant and Lounge, opened recently on Washington Avenue. The restaurant features cutting-edge international "beauty cuisine" made from fresh locally farmed organic products, wild game and seafood from sustainable sources. The healthy cuisine is scientifically designed to make you beautiful from the inside out. For more information, visit [www.afterglo-restaurant.com](http://www.afterglo-restaurant.com).

Famed Latino Chef, Douglas Rodriguez, has launched his newest venture in Miami, **Ola on Ocean** at The Savoy Hotel. Ola features the chef's famous Nuevo Latino cuisine, creative ceviches and **XOCOLAT**, Miami's only dessert and cigar bar. Ola is at the site that was formerly The Strand and has undergone a \$500,000 renovation. For more information, visit [www.olamiami.com](http://www.olamiami.com) or call 305-695-9125.

**Azul**, the signature restaurant at the luxurious Mandarin Oriental, Miami, will offer a series of interactive cooking classes with award-winning chef Clay Conley during 2006. Gourmands will have an opportunity to savor a weekend of culinary delights, book individual classes or reserve the entire six-class series. The weekend program includes accommodations for two nights, gourmet wine, cheese and fruit presentation as an arrival amenity, American breakfast daily for up to two persons, group interactive cooking class with Star Chef Clay Conley, private meeting with Chef Conley to choose the evening's dinner menu, three-course dinner for two in Azul and recipe cards and signature Azul apron as a take-home gift. These classes provide a rare opportunity to master the signature dishes that have made Azul one of the hottest restaurants in the nation. For more information and reservations, call 305-913-8358 or visit [www.mandarinoriental.com](http://www.mandarinoriental.com).

The **Mojito Room**, a new \$350,000 private party room at **Mango's Tropical Café**, promises the finest handmade selection of fresh mojitos in the world. The bar is a masterpiece copper sculpture of the Everglades entitled "River of Grass," which depicts the South Florida jungle, wildlife and a wall of copper flowers created by master copper sculptor Kim Brandell. Humberto Benitez created the passionate painting of dancers in the fields. For details, visit [www.mangostropicalcafe.com](http://www.mangostropicalcafe.com).

**Madiba Miami**, a new restaurant offering a unique South African experience, opened in South Beach in September 2005. Steeped in the tradition of the informal social halls called Shebeens in South African townships, the restaurant features an eclectic mix of comfort foods ranging from slow-cooked stews and homemade sausages to fresh fish spiced with coriander, cilantro, curry and other signature flavors. The wine list is dedicated to South African wines. For more information, visit [www.madibarestaurant.com](http://www.madibarestaurant.com).

Located in the heart of Coral Gables, **City Cellar** recently opened on Miracle Mile. City Cellar is a casual fine-dining restaurant specializing in Mediterranean-influenced food.

A large, lively bar features a glass-enclosed wine cellar serving over 40 wines by the glass and over 450 selections from around the world. For more information, visit [www.bigtimerestaurants.com](http://www.bigtimerestaurants.com).

**Ginger Grove** opened at the new Mayfair Hotel and Spa in Fall 2005, bringing an exciting new flavor to Coconut Grove. The family-style servings are inspired by the belief that to achieve all dishes should be served to be shared, rather than presented as separate courses. For more information, visit [www.gingergroverestaurant.com](http://www.gingergroverestaurant.com).

**Dogma Grill** has opened a second location on Washington and 15th Street in the heart of South Beach. The restaurant has a large indoor seating space with booths made of concrete with wide lacquered tables. There will also be a large outdoor seating area with a road-style café feel. For more information, visit [www.dogmagrill.com](http://www.dogmagrill.com).

Restaurateur Dennis Max has opened a new version of his popular Boca Raton restaurant **Max's Grille** in Coral Gables. Located at 55 Miracle Mile, the new space seats 185 indoors and 80 outside in a great indoor/outdoor setting featuring welcoming interiors and a lively bar scene. Executive chef John Belleme adds his own flair to the classic contemporary menu. Favorites range from shrimp and chicken firecracker rolls served with mango chili and a spicy peanut sauce to miso-glazed Chilean sea bass accompanied by wok-seared vegetables. Decadent chocolate-dipped macadamia nut cannolis are a popular dessert. For more information, call 305-567-2600 or visit [www.maxsrestaurants.com](http://www.maxsrestaurants.com).

## **ATTRACTION ACTION**

The **Miami Metrozoo** recently opened a new ride called "**The Wild Earth Jeep Simulator**" as part of its Dr. Wilde's World. Two people can climb aboard a Jeep and go on a virtual African safari. One person drives the vehicle through herds of elephants and prides of lions while the other photographs the adventure. At the end of the ride, participants can take home the pictures they took. Rides are \$5 per person. The Miami Metrozoo is also offering **balloon safaris**. A colorful tethered balloon takes up to five passengers 350 feet into the air for a 10-minute bird's eye view of the zoo. Rides are \$12 per person and are offered seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., weather permitting. For details, visit [www.miamimetrozoo.com](http://www.miamimetrozoo.com).

Vizcaya, the magnificent European-inspired estate of agricultural industrialist James Deering and now a National Historic Landmark, is launching a series of **Vizcaya Moonlight Tours** of its 10 acres of breathtaking gardens along Biscayne Bay. Slated for nights when the moon over Miami will be full, the 90-minute guided tours begin at 7:30 p.m. and cost \$10 per person. For information, visit [www.vizcayamuseum.org](http://www.vizcayamuseum.org).

**Miami Seaquarium**, one of South Florida's premier attractions, will reopen mid-February after the passing of Hurricane Wilma. Home of Lolita the Killer Whale, Salty the Sea Lion and TV dolphin superstar Flipper, the marine life park features a variety of sea life species, endangered Florida manatees and sea turtles. In addition, the park offers guests the opportunity to swim with dolphins. For more information, call 305-361-5705 or visit [www.miamiseaquarium.com](http://www.miamiseaquarium.com)

**Gulfstream Park**, long considered one of the nation's most beautiful and exciting thoroughbred racetracks, is nearing completion of its \$171 million renovation. World-class racing is the norm at Gulfstream Park, but racing will be only part of the experience at the 2006 meeting, which runs from Jan. 4 – April 23. There will be five restaurants at the new Gulfstream Park, ranging from the elegant to the casual. For more information, visit [www.gulfstreampark.com](http://www.gulfstreampark.com).

The **Gold Coast Railroad Museum** recently added a new exhibit by U.S. Sugar, detailing the role of sugar and railroading in Florida's history. The museum is also in the process of making vast improvements to its Model Train Exhibit, which houses an incredible collection of model railroads in many scales as well as priceless railroad paraphernalia. In addition to a new mural, there are now even more wood train set layouts for visiting children to play with, featuring "Thomas the Tank Engine" and other equipment, both free-wheeled and motorized. There is room for several children to play at once, and seating areas for supervising adults. For more information, call 305-253-0063 or visit [www.goldcoast-railroad.org](http://www.goldcoast-railroad.org).

The best all-inclusive attractions deal in Miami is now in-hand with the **Go Miami™ Card**. The card delivers unlimited, fully pre-paid admission to 28 of the city's top attractions and tours, plus additional savings on services, shopping and dining. The Card is available in increments of 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 days, to be used consecutively. One-day cards are \$59 for adults and \$45 for children, with per-day costs decreasing on multi-day cards down to \$29 for an adult and under \$20 for a child on the seven-day card. Each card comes with a free full-color guidebook listing all participating partners, plus maps and tips for planning itineraries. Visitors can purchase the Go Miami Card online at [www.gomiamicard.com](http://www.gomiamicard.com), through any of Smart Destinations' global distribution partners or at The Miami Beach Visitor Center at 1920 Meridian Avenue in Miami Beach.

## **ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURE**

**The Museum of Contemporary Art of North Miami** opened MOCA at Goldman Warehouse, a new exhibition and art warehouse space in the Wynwood arts and entertainment district of Miami, in December 2005. Located just south of the Miami Design District, this new facility is a satellite branch of MOCA's Joan Lehman Building in North Miami. MOCA at Goldman Warehouse doubles the museum's current gallery space and adds 4,000 square feet of art storage. The new galleries will be used to exhibit portions of the museum's permanent collection and projects by emerging artists. This state-of-the-art, climate-controlled annex will also house a branch of the MOCA Shop. For more information, visit [www.mocanomi.org](http://www.mocanomi.org).

**The World Erotic Art Museum** recently opened its doors in South Beach. Featuring a permanent collection of erotic art valued at over \$10 million, the museum features a variety of works collected by Naomi Wilzig from all over the world. Fiber optic-lit cubicles display an extraordinary mix of paintings, sculptures and tapestries visually illustrating the historic perspective of erotic art drawn from the early days of the Roman Empire to the contemporary world. The World Erotic Art Museum is located on the Mezzanine Level of 1205 Washington Avenue. It is open seven days from 11 a.m. to

midnight. Admission is \$15 per person. For more information, call 305-532-9336 or visit [www.weam.com](http://www.weam.com).

The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) is a non-profit sales and marketing organization whose mission is to attract visitors to Greater Miami and the Beaches for leisure, business and conventions. For a vacation guide visit our website at [www.MiamiAndBeaches.com](http://www.MiamiAndBeaches.com) or call 1-888-76-Miami (US/Canada only) or 305-447-7777. To reach the GMCVB offices dial 305-539-3000. Meeting planners may call 1-800-933-8448 (US/Canada only) or 305-539-3071 or visit [www.MiamiMeetings.com](http://www.MiamiMeetings.com).

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