



Fort Lauderdale, Florida
September '05

Three**Perfect**Days

Fort Lauderdale

By Denise Reynolds / Photography by Kenneth Redding / FORT LAUDERDALE IS ALL about water. An intricate web of waterways 300 miles long draws boats of every possible permutation. More than 50 cruise ships sail from the city's 12-terminal Port Everglades, making it the busiest cruise port in the world. It boasts more five-star ships than any other port in the United States, including Cunard's *Queen Mary 2*—the tallest, longest, widest, and, at \$780 million, most expensive passenger liner ever built. ¶ Big money and big boats are synonymous here; this city is the yachting capital of the world. ▶▶▶





DAY 1

Fort
Lauderdale
FL

Linger amid the shady palms and alluring privacy of the Lago Mar resort; then head out to the beach, the shops, or—for some serious yacht-gazing—the city's many docks and waterways.

Each year, the Fort Lauderdale Boat Show spotlights \$2 billion worth of yachts with names such as *The World Is Not Enough*—a four-story megayacht that measures 140 feet.

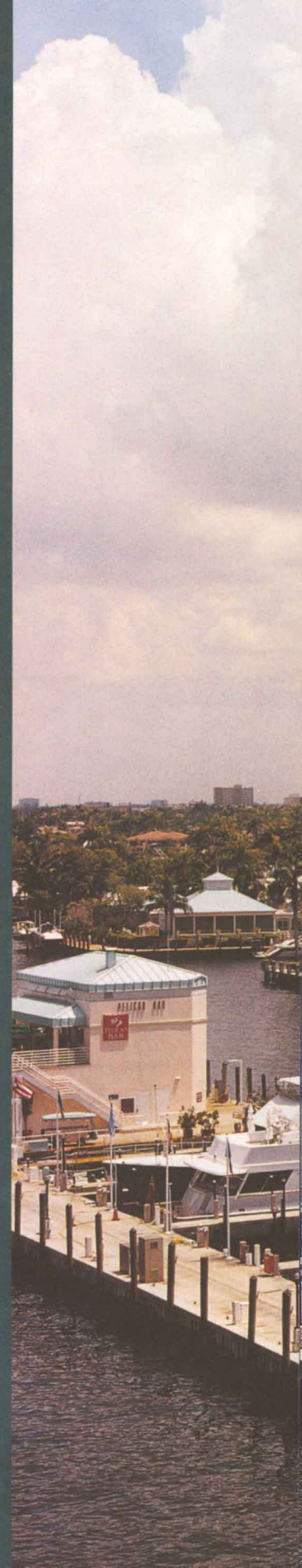
Add 23 miles of sun-kissed beaches, and the allure of Fort Lauderdale is unmistakable. Once known largely as a destination for college students on spring break, the city has matured into a cosmopolitan town whose residents and guests bask in its wealth of waterfront diversions.

DAY ONE / As you stand on the balcony of your suite watching the sun rise over Fort Lauderdale's largest private beach, consider yourself an insider at **1 Lago Mar Resort and Club**. Tucked away in an exclusive residential area, this hotel also is a private club. A family-owned, four-diamond resort, it exudes Old Florida charm, with low-slung, blue-canvas beach chairs perfectly positioned close to the sand to maximize toe-digging ability. Coconut palms provide patches of natural shade, a rare delight on the beach. You'll be tempted to linger all day, refining the art of doing absolutely nothing, but it's time to slip on your deck shoes and head up A1A to **2 Trina** for breakfast. From your table on the breezy seaside terrace, watch the beach wake up. Mediterranean influences abound in the kitchen. Choose the smoked salmon with scrambled eggs, crème fraîche, and Ciabatta toast; the accompanying home fries are enhanced with leeks, apple-wood smoked bacon, and Italian parsley.

It's time to take to the water. Meet up dockside (at 2301 S.E. 17th St. Causeway; Tel: 954-463-1414) with Capt. Herb Rassing and his lovable Wheaton terrier, Capt. Morgan, and board *The Chesapeake*—a 46-foot Westsail, custom built for longtime newsman Walter Cronkite. Spend the morning cruising the Intracoastal Waterway and the New River, gliding past palatial estates along Millionaire's Row while Capt. Herb regales you with stories about the estates' celebrity owners.

Tie up at **3 Blue Moon Fish Co.**, one of the many

A canvas chair on a quiet stretch at Lago Mar speaks of Old Florida (previous page); bask in the resort's secluded poolside luxury (above); big boats roost at Pier 66 (right).







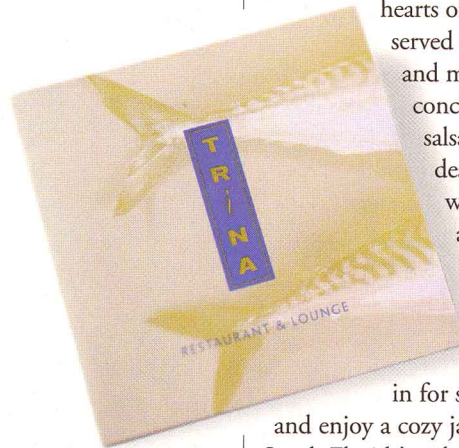
restaurants lining the waterways, and take an outdoor table. Treat Capt. Herb to lunch; midday entrées are two for one every day except Sunday. Order the topless swordfish sandwich and a glass of Pinot Noir as you watch arriving captains walk their boats sideways (the equivalent of double parking) to procure spots at the full dock. Leisurely dining is the rule, so try the banana-cream white-chocolate mousse for dessert.

Meander back up the Intracoastal. Capt. Herb will drop you off just a few paces from **4 Pelican Bar**, located atop the marine store that serves Pier 66's famed 127-slip marina, the home away from home for some of the world's most celebrated megayachts. Sip a tropical libation while a lone guitarist sings mellow, Buffet-like tunes. From your second-story perch, enjoy the parade of boats that passes under the 55-foot-high bridge and view the majestic cruise ships in Port Everglades, just south of the 17th Street Causeway. Catch the water taxi behind Pelican Bar and head back up the New River to Las Olas Boulevard. As the sun goes down, the homes along the water glow from within, affording a surprisingly close-up view into the lives of the families who live there.

Disembark at Southeast Ninth Avenue and walk one block east to **5 Mark's Las Olas** to feast on Mark Militello's award-winning Floribbean cuisine. Twenty years ago this area was a culinary wasteland. Chef Mark and a couple of his South Florida cohorts, collectively known as the Mango Gang, forever changed the face of fine dining here, putting SoFl firmly on the culinary map. Local ingredients shine; many are sourced from artisanal producers for the daily-changing menu. Fresh

hearts of palm take center stage in a salad served with pistachio-crusting soft-shell crab and mango bierre blanc. Caicos cracked conch is paired with mango-black bean salsa and a vanilla rum butter. For dessert, try the coconut crème caramel with mango and pineapple carpaccio and crispy macadamia-nut phyllo.

After dinner, walk one block to **6 Mangos**, have a cappuccino, and wind down. Snag one of the popular sidewalk tables and settle in for some people-watching, or sit inside and enjoy a cozy jazz-club atmosphere. Reflecting South Florida's cultural diversity, musicians from a range of genres play here. You may hear swing, rock, salsa, hip-hop, jazz, or rhythm and blues.



Trina's hearty breakfast is worth waking up for (above); Capt. Herb Ressing will show you the town and tell you its tales onboard *The Chesapeake* (left).

DAY TWO / Take a short walk over to **1 Shula's on the Beach** and sit on the beachside patio for a breakfast befitting former Miami Dolphins Coach Don Shula's perfect-season team. Back in 1972, when the Dolphins went 17-0, this beach was jammed with hundreds of thousands of college students during the annual spring

migration. Now, the crowd is low-key, and the beach action centers around the “wave wall,” a stylized, curving white wall extending along the promenade, where walkers, cyclists, and in-line skaters abound.

Saunter up the beach and get in the swim of things at the **2 International Swimming Hall of Fame**. The museum showcases Olympic memorabilia going back more than 100 years. It also displays aquatic-themed artwork by Leroy Neiman, Norman Rockwell, and Henri Matisse. With a stoke of luck, you’ll get a peek at some of the Olympic hopefuls who come here to compete in swimming, diving, water polo, and synchronized swimming events at one of the hall’s 2 million-gallon pools.

Inspired by your brush with athletic prowess, head over to **3 Aloha Watersports**. Strap into a parasail, harness the power of the wind (and the accompanying speedboat), and prepare for some jaw-dropping views of the Atlantic coastline. Float effortlessly, 600 feet above the surf, for a 10-minute ride that will leave you feeling fearless and exhilarated.

For a well-deserved healthful lunch break, take Sunrise Boulevard over the drawbridge and turn in at **4 Seasons 52**. Try an order of flatbread; the vine ripened-tomato selection is a standout. The butterless, creamless Yukon gold mashed potatoes are mysteriously marvelous with your cedar-plank salmon or London broil. Just say yes to dessert: These mini-indulgences have less than 400 calories each.

Next, turn your attention to the indoor sport of shopping at the nearby Galleria Mall. For outrageous shoes in which to dance the night away, don’t miss Ermaré. And if bling’s your thing, Mayors Jewelers, a South Florida tradition, is a must.

Now that you’ve flexed your retail muscles a bit, drive west on Sunrise Boulevard to **5 The New Auto Toy Store**, where the rubber meets the road. This is the largest showroom of exotic cars in the world. The clientele includes businesspeople, celebrities, and sports

Indulge in the *dolce far niente* on the beach (below), or explore the city’s many surprises, among them the world’s largest showroom of exotic cars (bottom).



DAY ONE

- 1 Lago Mar Resort and Club** / 1700 S. Ocean Lane; Tel: 954-523-6511
- 2 Trina** / 601 N. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd. (A1A); Tel: 954-567-8070
- 3 Blue Moon Fish Co.** 4405 W. Tradewinds Ave.; Tel: 954-267-9888
- 4 Pelican Bar** / 2301 S.E. 17th St. Causeway; Tel: 954-525-6666
- 5 Mark’s Las Olas** 1032 E. Las Olas Blvd.; Tel: 954-463-1000
- 6 Mangos** / 904 E. Las Olas Blvd.; Tel: 954-523-5001

DAY TWO

- 1 Shula’s on the Beach** 321 N. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd. (A1A); Tel: 954-355-4000
- 2 International Swimming Hall of Fame** 1 Hall of Fame Drive; Tel: 954-462-6536
- 3 Aloha Watersports** 3030 Holiday Drive; Tel: 954-462-SAIL
- 4 Seasons 52** 2428 E. Sunrise Blvd.; Tel: 954-537-1052
- 5 The New Auto Toy Store** 1624 E. Sunrise Blvd.; Tel: 954-463-1700
- 6 Marina at Pier 66** S.E. 17th St. Causeway
- 7 Grille 66** 2301 S.E. 17th St. Causeway; Tel: 954-728-3500
- 8 Café del Mar** / 213 S. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd. (A1A); Tel: 954-767-8233

DAY THREE

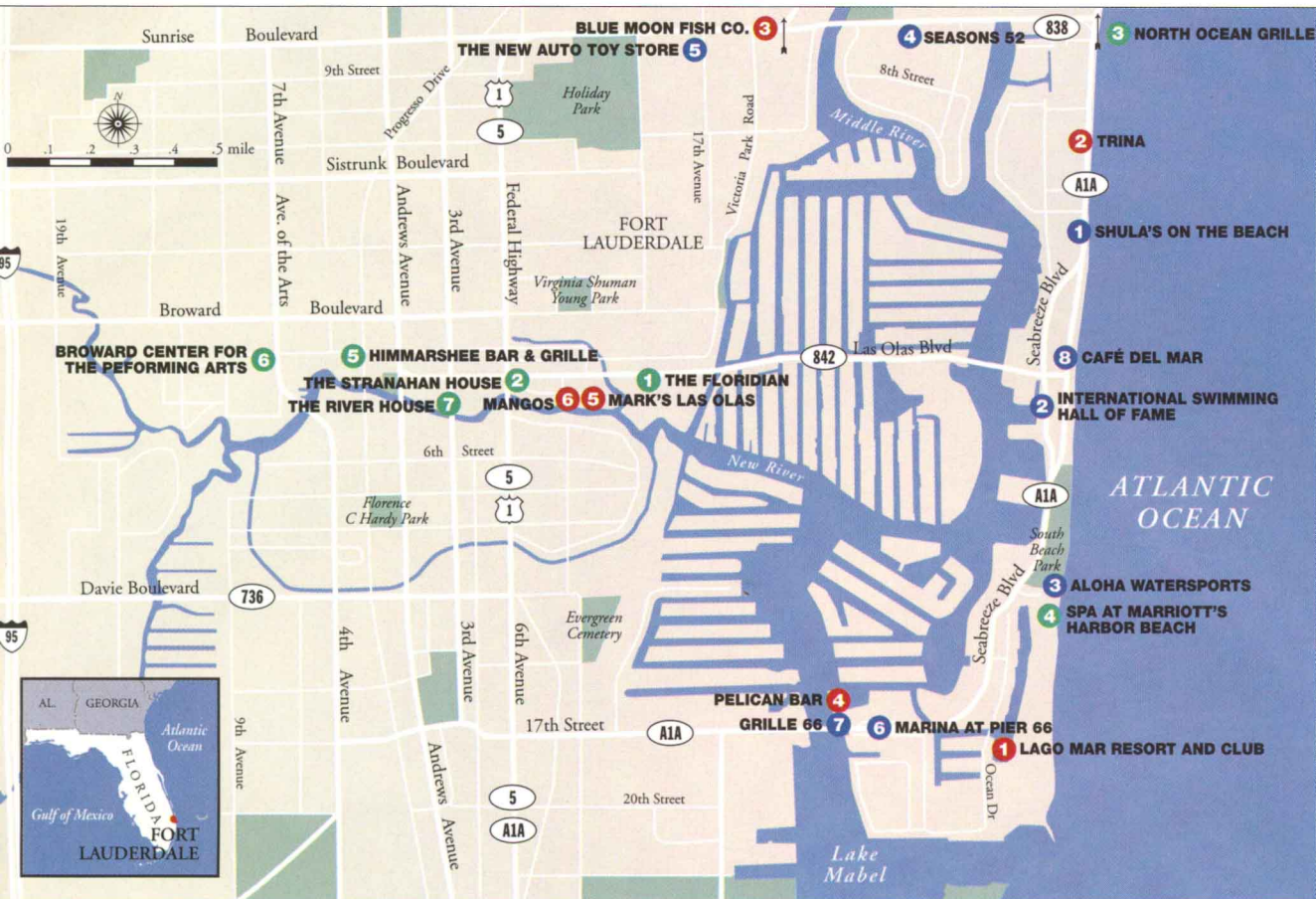
- 1 The Floridian** / 1410 E. Las Olas Blvd.; Tel: 954-524-4736
- 2 The Stranahan House** 335 S.E. Sixth Ave.; Tel: 954-610-5535
- 3 North Ocean Grille** 2000 N. Atlantic Blvd. (A1A); Tel: 954-568-9431
- 4 Spa at Marriott’s Harbor Beach** / 3030 Holiday Drive; Tel: 954-525-4000
- 5 Himmarshee Bar & Grille** 210 S.W. Second St.; Tel: 954-524-1818
- 6 Broward Center for the Performing Arts** / 201 S.W. Fifth Ave.; Tel: 954-462-0222
- 7 The River House** 301 S.W. Third Ave.; Tel: 954-525-7661

DAY 2

Fort Lauderdale FL

After getting an enticing eyeful of the impressive fleet in **The New Auto Toy Store**, cool off in the soothing ocean waters and relax along the ample stretches of South Florida sand.





AVERAGE HIGH TEMP	F°	84	76	77	80	83	86	89	90	90	89	85	81	77
	C°	29	24	25	27	28	30	32	32	32	32	29	27	25
AVERAGE LOW TEMP	YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	
	F°	68	58	59	63	66	72	74	76	76	75	72	67	61
C°	20	14	15	17	19	22	23	24	24	24	22	19	16	

Fort Lauderdale Weather

The city is blessed with practically perfect weather; year-round temperatures average 77 degrees, and sunshine is plentiful. Planning for a September port of call is easy. Warm, muggy air dominates much of the month, with highs around 90 and lows in the mid-70s. Temperature extremes are rare; only once in recorded history has the mercury hit 100 degrees in September; the lowest low was only 61. Prepare for rain; though sunshine predominates, September is the tail end of the rainy season. Recent Atlantic hurricanes have taken a toll in Florida, but in Fort Lauderdale, a direct hit (a hurricane within 40 miles) occurs only

once every 13 to 14 years. August is the wettest month. Late-afternoon thundershowers punctuate sultry summer days, a signal to head in to freshen up for dinner. In winter, Florida's dry season, a jacket is recommended; you'll enjoy autumnlike weather, with sunshine, low humidity, and occasional cold fronts. Afternoon thunderstorms return by May. If you're swimming in the ocean, heed lifeguards' warnings regarding rip currents.

The Weather Channel

Weather information is provided by The Weather Channel. For more Fort Lauderdale climatological details, visit weather.com.

Getting Grounded

Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport is called the "easy come, easy go" airport for good reason. You'll never walk more than five minutes to a gate or to baggage claim. The airport also offers free wireless access. Savvy travelers bypass the airport's new, consolidated rental-car center and instead grab a taxi to lounge by their hotel pool while a concierge arranges hotel delivery of their reserved Enterprise rental. Shared rides to beach hotels run \$8, a metered taxi is about \$12, and a private car is \$30.

Getting Around

For fun along the water, take advantage of the best deal in

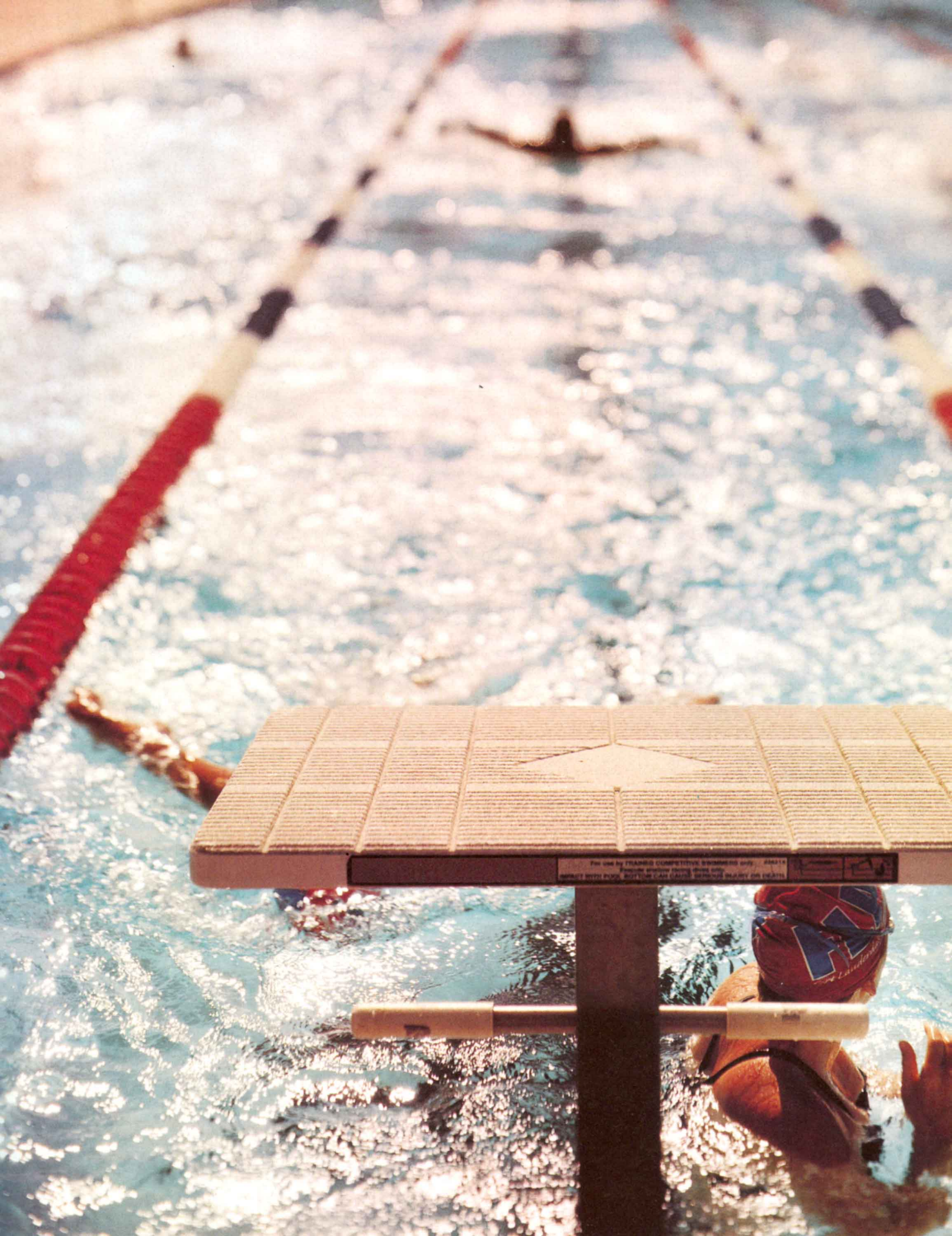
town: \$5 buys an all-day pass on the water taxi, which stops at a score of popular docks.

Fort Lauderdale for Kids

Lago Mar has a private beach and two pools, plus a game room; a miniature-golf course; tennis, beach volleyball, and shuffleboard courts; an old-style soda shop; a playground; and a giant outdoor chess set. The Museum of Discovery and Science (mods.org) has a living Atlantic coral reef. Kids also will see sharks, alligators, iguanas and more. At Wannado City (wannadocity.com), youngsters can try their hand at being a doctor, firefighter, film director, and more than 100 other professions.



***** BOARDING PASS /** Ted's your guy if Fort Lauderdale (FLL) or a cruise is on your agenda. United's low-fare carrier serves Fort Lauderdale with one daily flight from Denver (DEN) and Washington Dulles (IAD) and two daily flights from Chicago O'Hare (ORD). Ted obviously loves Florida. He also flies to Miami (MIA), Tampa (TPA), and Orlando (MCO). Combine Ted flights with United's main line, United Express and the Star Alliance, and the world's oceans become see-worthy.



stars who buy cars from Lamborghini, Ferrari, and Lotus. If you're buying, the showroom delivers anywhere, once dropping a Hummer onto an eight-mile-long island in the Florida Keys.

It's been said that the only difference between men and boys is the size of their toys. For evidence, cruise over to the **6 Marina at Pier 66**, where the toys at the dock run well into the eight-figure range. Before you succumb to yacht envy, take the elevator up to the Pier Top Lounge and order a single-malt scotch. Settle into a leather chair and begin the cool-down phase of your shopping workout. Gaze out over the intricate lattice of canals as the lounge rotates, giving you a panoramic view.

Dinner tonight is at **7 Grille 66**, which borders the waterway and provides sensational views of the marina. Savor a sizzling prime aged steak or a succulent serving of the daily catch. If comfort food is what floats your boat, you're in the right place.

Return to the beach, grab a table at **8 Café Del Mar**, and listen to an impassioned performance of flamenco guitar. When the tables fill up, people line the sidewalks and dance along the street. Have a nightcap, and lose yourself in the music and the moonlight.

DAY THREE / Go with the Flo for breakfast this morning at **1 The Floridian**. The city's power brokers make their deals here over "The Mess," a heavenly hash of eggs, sausage, cheese, home fries, and bacon. But you can splurge with the "Fat Cat," a New York strip steak, two eggs, grits, and a biscuit—served with a bottle of Dom Pérignon. This landmark is open 24/7 and has been serving buttermilk biscuits and gravy since 1937.

Stroll up Las Olas Boulevard and explore the fashionable boutiques and galleries that line this charming six-block stretch. Shop for tropical togs at Tommy Bahama or Lauderdale Lifestyle. Juice up your poolside wardrobe at Shop 603, or pick up a pair of decadent designer sunglasses at Optical Spectrum. Break for a midmorning coffee at Stork's Café

before continuing west to **2 The Stranahan House**, Fort Lauderdale's oldest building, nestled among skyscrapers on the banks of the New River. Built in 1901, the building originally served as a trading post for bartering with the Seminole Indians. Later it became the post office and town hall and now houses a museum. Wide porches and a Victorian parlor make this slice of Old Florida a splendid example of frontier design.

For lunch, head to the beach. As pelicans dive playfully into the water in search of their next meal, you'll have a front-row seat at **3 North Ocean Grille**. Sit under



The Flo has fed Florida since 1937 (above); at the International Swimming Hall of Fame, you may see Olympic hopefuls competing in the 2 million-gallon pools (left).



Coconut palms provide natural shade as you survey the cool blue of the Atlantic. Splurge on a massage by the sea, allowing the rhythmic sounds of the surf to lull you into quiet contentment.

lazily turning fans at what is surely the most peaceful spot around for beachfront dining. Go light with a cup of conch chowder and half of a club sandwich. Ask for sweet-potato fries; they come sprinkled with brown sugar and cinnamon and will satisfy your sweet tooth.

Just when you think life doesn't get any better, it does—at the **4 Spa at Marriott's Harbor Beach**. Treat yourself to a beachfront ocean-cabana massage. For blissful seclusion, request cabana No. 27 or No. 28, and then drift off to nirvana as the sound of the surf resonates with the therapist's rhythmic motions.

Linger before heading to your hotel to dress for dinner. Tonight, go down to the Riverwalk, Fort Lauderdale's arts and entertainment district, for dinner at the decidedly hip **5 Himmarshee Bar & Grille**. Sip a watermelon martini at Side Bar before taking a table on the sidewalk. As the sun sets, the young professionals come out to play, and the watering holes that line this street are their playground. Dig into the oak-grilled filet mignon with Gorgonzola cheese.

Curtain time is approaching at **6 Broward Center for the Performing Arts**, so walk briskly west. You're sure to find something scintillating onstage—Broadway musical or serious drama, modern dance or ballet, classical or pop concert. The Broward Center ranks third in the world in theater ticket sales.

Afterward, join other departing theatergoers as they wander back along Riverwalk Park, a scenic promenade on the New River. Your last stop is the patio at **7 The River House** for an après-theater cordial. Pull up a chair outside the sunroom, where a duo will entertain you with pop-music favorites. Under the towering oaks that frame this historical 1903 house, reflect on the changes the river has witnessed as this city has blossomed before her. Then wave a fond farewell, and vow to return next year. **Denise Reynolds** is a Fort Lauderdale-based travel writer who specializes in food and wine, luxury travel, and spas.

Greater Fort Lauderdale offers 23 miles of sunny shoreline (top); distinctive restaurants and shops add urban energy to the city's beach-town warmth (right).





HIMMARSHEE
SIDE BAR

HIMMARSHEE
BAR & GRILLE

SIDE BAR

SIDE BAR

SIDE BAR

Girls
Night
Out
Wednesdays

Guys
Night
Out
Sundays

Half Price Entrees

Half Price Entrees