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MIAMI HONES REPUTATION AS 'CRUISE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD'

(MIAMI) – Long known as the "Cruise Capital of the World," Miami is among the nation's leading seaports and is now home to nine major cruise lines. The Port of Miami handles more than 3.7 million cruise passengers annually and on a single day in December 2007 served a record nine cruise ships carrying 30,000 passengers.

Cruise travelers can choose from a wide variety of destinations, including the Bahamas, Mexico, Caribbean, South America, Europe, the Far East and other exotic ports of call around the world. Fun-filled itineraries range from just four days to fourteen days or more.

What savvy travelers have learned, however, is to add a few days to their travel plans to take full advantage of pre- and post-cruise activities in Greater Miami. Families love to explore the Florida Everglades, Jungle Island, Miami Children's Museum and the Miami Seaquarium, while trendy South Beach, with its world-famous Art Deco District is a must-see for everyone. The Miami Design Preservation League offers self-guided taped tours or guided walking/ biking tours of the most astounding of the 800+ Art Deco buildings.

Miami has also been on a meteoric rise as a serious culinary destination. The city is home to more than 6,000 dining spots ranging from casual al fresco cafes to serious seen-and-be-seen restaurants serving flavor-packed "Floribbean" cuisine. The nightlife – which has been attracting big name celebrities in droves – is also legendary for its chic bars and red-hot dance clubs.

For those who love to shop, venues include the nearby Bayside Marketplace, as well as the luxurious Bal Harbour Shops and Village of Merrick Park. Lincoln Road and "Miracle Mile" in Coral Gables are also chock-a-block with shops. Ladies – and

increasingly gentlemen – may also want to indulge in a day at one of Miami's many top-notch spas.

Those who want to squeeze in a little history or culture pre- or post-cruise should head straight to Vizcaya Museum and Gardens or one of Miami's other fine museums, including the Miami Art Museum, The Wolfsonian - FIU and the Bass Museum of Art. Fueled in part by the skyrocketing success of Art Basel Miami Beach, art galleries also abound.

Outdoor enthusiasts can indulge in world-class fishing, sailing, wreck diving and snorkeling. Kayaking is a great way to navigate the waters of Biscayne Bay and Miami's inland waterways and canoe trips for every possible interest are offered by the Miami Dade Parks and Recreation Department. Award-winning golf courses and tennis complexes also punctuate the landscape.

Cruise visitors can also partake in the colorful festivals staged by Miami throughout the year. Among the most notable are Art Deco Weekend (January), Coconut Grove Arts Festival, Miami International Boat Show, and South Beach Wine & Food Festival (February), Carnival Miami (March) showcasing Miami's Latin flavor, and Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival (May/June), where Coconut Grove is transformed into Nassau's Bay Street. Every August and September, more than 100 of the city's top restaurants take part in Miami Spice Restaurant Month, offering their patrons substantial savings on three-course meals.

While Miami rolls out the red carpet for its cruise visitors – including a state-of-the-art passenger terminal and reasonable fares for long-term parking – the city also extends a warm welcome for those who want to extend their stays and sample all the sophisticated, multicultural city has to offer.

The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) is an independent not-for-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 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.

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