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## CHARMING AND CHIC BY DESIGN: MIAMI'S BOUTIQUE HOTELS, INNS AND GUESTHOUSES

(MIAMI) – Although Miami can offer travelers accommodations ranging from luxury resorts to low-cost hostels, the city is known for having the **highest concentration of boutique hotels in America**. A steady stream of these small hotels – often with 100 rooms or less – have blossomed throughout Greater Miami in recent years to offer discerning travelers more personalized hotel experiences.

In sizzling South Beach's Art Deco District, boutique hotels are the rule instead of the exception. More than two dozen boutique hotels now line Ocean Drive, Collins Avenue and the streets in between, which are home to the largest collection of Art Deco buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The historically preserved Art Deco architecture serves as the perfect vehicle for smaller-scaled, one-of-a-kind properties and more and more overnight visitors to Greater Miami are becoming hip to the charms of these chic little hotels. Luxurious amenities, warm, personalized service, interesting design and great central locations all add up to make boutique hotels a perfect starting point for exploring Miami.

Radiating with personality, Miami's boutique hotels each have their own allure -- with imaginative in-room perks ranging from mini bars with retro snacks to state-of-the-art shower heads. Special services run the gamut from VIP passes to the hottest night clubs to in-room and oceanside yoga instruction. Some hotels keep frequent guests' favorite breakfast cereals on hand, while others provide complimentary fruit baskets, trendy fashion magazines and chocolate chip cookies for their guests.

Another hot hotel is the **Standard Miami**, which trendy hotel guru Andre Balazs opened in late 2005 on the Venetian Causeway in Miami Beach. The hotel

opened after a multimillion dollar renovation of the Lido Spa and features outdoor yoga lawns, garden fire lounge, a waterfall hot tub, huge sound pool (featuring underwater music), an arctic plunge, treatment rooms, mud lounge, sunset waterfront yoga, outdoor showers, a full array of spa treatments and much more.

Located on Ocean Drive and 10th Street, the **Breakwater Hotel** is a completely new condo hotel within historic walls. The hotel, consists of 95 luxurious rooms with an ultra-modern, Euro-fashion design. Also located in the heart of South Beach's Art Deco District, the **Anglers Boutique Resort** was restored to bring back its original luster with all the amenities of a 21st-century condo and reopened in early 2007.

When the **Clinton Hotel** opened in 2003 after a \$12 million renovation, the Art Deco gem raised the bar for luxurious accommodations on South Beach. The 88-room property blends historic restoration with eye-popping contemporary design, culminating in an urban oasis with serene guest quarters (huge suites feature private Jacuzzis).

The **Victor Hotel**, which also reopened in 2003, was a 10-year, \$48 million project in the making. Located next to the former Versace mansion on Ocean Drive, the historic 1937 property underwent a complete renovation and expansion that brought its room total to 91 and placed it at the upper end of the boutique luxury market.

Two other strong players in that market are the historic oceanfront **Sagamore Hotel and the Betsy Hotel**. The 93-room all-suite hotel features a breathtaking contemporary art collection, with provocative pieces spread throughout the hotel's public spaces and guestrooms. Luxurious suites boast fabulous views of city and sea, and feature mini-kitchenettes, Modernist furniture and oversized whirlpool tubs.

Upon opening, the trendsetting **Delano** quickly established itself as the epicenter of cool, internationally renowned for its cutting-edge design, acclaimed Blue Door restaurant, rooftop spa and celebrity scene. Guests and gawkers also flock to **The Shore Club**. Deceptively hidden away, oozing with exclusivity and Zen-like calm that is reflected in its clean, striking architecture, the hotel is home to Nobu restaurant. Nearby, **The National** and **The Raleigh Hotel** boast two of South Florida's most historic and beautiful swimming pools.

Another South Beach success story unfolded in 1998. Urban developer and preservationist Tony Goldman joined forces with innovative fashion designer Todd Oldham to create one of South Beach's most beautiful boutique properties, **The Hotel**. Consistent with Oldham's love of handmade details and lush color sense, the decor at The Hotel is a cozy mix of rich, cool colors and artisan detailing. It is home to an award-

winning restaurant, Wish, a rooftop pool with panoramic views and a boutique that sells many of the Oldham-designed products used throughout the hotel. The **Mondrian South Beach** boasts direct access to one of the most vibrant cities in the world with sunset views overlooking the Downtown Miami skyline and direct access to the blue waters of Biscayne Bay.

Equally elegant, **Hotel Nash** is a sleek, European-feeling small hotel with a redesign inspired by the French Riviera. Hotel highlights include one of Miami's best restaurants in Mark's South Beach, as well as three separate pools filled with freshwater, saltwater, and mineral water.

Fun-loving travelers seeking oceanfront accommodation in the center of all the action can check out the Diesel-owned **Pelican Hotel**, one of the premier collections of personality-packed hotels on glamorous Ocean Drive. A hit with the fashion, music and publishing set, the quirky hotel features 30 individually designed rooms offering themes from "Psychedelic" to "Executive Fifties." Vintage furniture is a perfect complement to high-tech amenities that reflect the Italian clothing company's offbeat aesthetic.

In contrast, just up the road, **The Tides South Beach** rolled out a distinctive new look for its 45 guest rooms and public spaces in 2007. Trend-setting designer Kelly Wearstler of kwid returned glamour to this iconic property that evokes a vibrant sense of style and a sexy remix of The Tides past, present and future. Guests who stay here are misted with Fiji water at the hotel pool and offered the hotel's signature tropical fresh fruit popsicles, not to mention close proximity to one of the finest restaurants in South Beach, La Marea at The Tides.

Cutting-edge design is a common theme in Greater Miami's boutique properties with small, beautiful standouts like the **Crest, St. Augustine** and the upscale **Hotel Astor**, all warranting attention as great examples of modern takes on a classic theme. Likewise, designer Todd Oldham was the mastermind behind extensive renovations at **The Fairfax**, a luxury boutique hotel with 53 high-end fractional ownership suites that opened in 2007. The **Clevelander Hotel** has also embarked on a \$20 million renovation project. In collaboration with the STA Architecture Group and interior designer Zyscovich, the hotel has recently introduced a revamped lobby and guest rooms, a new sports bar and other bars, and a rooftop lounge area.

In tony Coral Gables, the European-style, 27-room **Hotel St. Michel** is the essence of Old World elegance. Close to the Village of Merrick Park, with its haute couture fashion and home décor boutiques and gourmet restaurants, the small charming hotel

features rooms furnished with carefully chosen antiques, turn down service with imported chocolates and a warm and attentive staff.

### ***Chic Boutiques: Hostels and Guesthouses***

For those willing to trade amenities for budget and the opportunity to meet fellow travelers from around the world, hostels are a terrific, inexpensive lodging option on Miami Beach. The roster of friendly hostels, with single and double occupancy rooms as well as dormitory-style accommodations starting as low as \$20 a night, is impressive. One of the longest operating, the internationally-acclaimed **Hosteling International-Miami Beach at the Clay Hotel** is a seven-building complex on artsy Espanola Way, in the heart of the Art Deco District. Backpackers are also welcome at the **Miami Beach International Travelers Hostel** and the **Tropics Hotel and Hostel**.

Guest houses, such as **South Beach Villas, Lorraine Hotel, Chesterfield Hotel, The Catalina, Circa39, Whitelaw Hotel** and **Lily Guest House**, offer affordable Miami Beach accommodations with a dash of relaxed European ambiance. Some guests become so enamored with the laid-back lifestyle they become long-term residents.

### ***Romantic Inns and Cozy B&Bs***

Many visitors opt to step off the beaten path to enjoy a quiet sojourn at a historic inn or one of the cozy bed and breakfasts that inhabit the back roads. Miami offers a variety of options for those whose dream vacation includes a cozy corner to read in and relaxing over a home-cooked breakfast.

Brimming with history, the **Miami River Inn**, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a true hideaway that sings with the spirit of old Miami. Built in 1908, the renovated property consists of four wooden cottages, converted into 40 individually decorated rooms. Complete with pool and other amenities, the Inn is situated directly on the Miami River, with great vantages for watching river commerce float by, and only minutes from downtown Miami shopping, dining and cultural attractions.

Just north of South Beach, camaraderie can be found poolside by the gardens at **The Indian Creek Hotel**, one block from the beach. This charming historic inn, built in 1936, was recently purchased and renovated by New York Inns Hotel Group. Although the inn maintains its Old World aura on the outside, inside it now features stylish and colorful modern furniture, hardwood floors and Wi-Fi.

For those who want to get away from it all without venturing too far from civilization, Homestead and the Redland, the center of Miami's agricultural

breadbasket, are only 40 minutes from downtown. Here, horses munch on front lawns, and backyards are filled with avocado trees. Those who long to repose among the lush, tropical landscaping or Biscayne Bay's soothing waters, and enjoy close proximity to attractions like Everglades or Biscayne National Parks, can spend time at **Katy's Place** and **Ten Oaks**: two private homes that offer B&B accommodations. Alternately, the historic **Redland Hotel** offers accommodation in downtown Homestead.

For information on the above or other small hotel options, visit [www.MiamiBoutiqueHotels.com](http://www.MiamiBoutiqueHotels.com), the new website sponsored by the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau. The site offers details on properties, and provides an opportunity to make reservations online.

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