



PHOTO BY IAN SCHRAGER COMPANY

Tropicale at The Miami Beach EDITION has tasty poolside dining, sublime ocean views and saucy cocktails.



PHOTO BY THOMPSON MIAMI BEACH

Palm trees surround the serene swimming pool space at Thompson Miami Beach. As Miami Beach celebrates its 100th anniversary, the sunny hotspot is being recognized for its design, cuisine and culture.

MIAMI'S NEW HAUTE SPOT

The it-crowd is moving north to Mid-Beach where the boutique hotel scene is booming

By Rochelle Lash

With Miami Beach celebrating 100 years in 2015, the boutique hotel scene is so hot that new oceanfront resorts are opening faster than you can say Art Deco, and each one is more architecturally ingenious, more entertaining and more indulgent than the last.

Miami and The Beaches have surged into a sexy new-age destination that hotel maestro Ian

Schrager calls the "third coast." The sunny, sandy strip is revelling in a record number of tourists (a good part of Greater Miami's 14.5 million visitors in 2014), mostly from South America, Europe – and the U.S. and Canada, of course.

The sultry year-round Florida climate, top-ranked beaches and sparkling Atlantic waters are the classic draws. But the sensational sunspot also

has morphed into a hub of progressive design, creative cuisine, electric nightlife, world-class culture and major-league sports.

Glitterati such as Kate Hudson, Matt Damon, Kate Moss, Justin Timberlake and Leonardo DiCaprio flock to events such as Art Basel, to be held Dec. 3-6; the South Beach Wine & Food Festival, Feb. 25-28; and the Miami International Film Festival (MIFF),



PHOTO BY IAN SCHRAGER COMPANY

The Miami Beach EDITION, a spectacular next-generation urban resort facing the Atlantic Ocean, was developed by boutique hotel pioneer Ian Schrager.

March 4-13.

Miami has the second-busiest international airport in the U.S. (after JFK in New York) and it is home to the world's largest cruise port (now served by the new PortMiami Tunnel from highways I-395 and I-95).

The social buzz is so intense, the tourist demand so irrepressible and Art Basel so influential, that cutting-edge new hotels are bursting forth exponentially. South Beach has flourished variously as quaint, trendy, gay and notorious for a century, an epicentre of fun along Lincoln Road, Ocean Drive and Collins Avenue, south of 20th Street.

The it-crowd is moving north. The 21st-century scene is the moneyed and fashionable Mid-Beach, a stretch of Collins from 20th Street to 44th, studied with luxurious celebrity playgrounds, ultimate cocktail bars, gourmet restaurants and people watching par excellence.

Schrager pioneered the hip, design-centric boutique concept with his super-cool Morgans New York during the 1980s, and ignited South Beach's reboot in the 1990s with the chichi Delano.

Since then, the haute monde has patronized swanky retreats such as the semi-private Soho Beach House and the serene Setai (a favourite of Gisèle, Madonna and Beyoncé), as well as repolished jewels of Art Deco design such as The Raleigh, The National and the delightful, food-forward Metropolitan by Como.

The dazzling new Miami Beach EDITION is a modern landmark of sleek sophistication. In collaboration with Marriott, Schrager has expanded his boutique concept to a five-star urban resort of



PHOTO BY IAN SCHRAGER COMPANY

The soothing spa at The Miami Beach EDITION features services such as build-your-own massage, a hammam and infra-red sauna, hair and makeup services, a boutique and a relaxation lounge.

swimming pools, gardens, a spa and Latin-inspired cuisine by Michelin-starred chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten.

EDITION is a lot bigger than boutique, but design remains paramount thanks to the stunning work by Canadian firm Yabu Pushelberg. The airy lobby sports white marble floors, potted palms and sofas covered in white duck. The staff, decked out in white suits, look like the swells in Ocean Drive magazine. The guest rooms are serene, spare and soothing.

And Schrager still generates a hip, next-generation vibe. EDITION's playful entertainment options include an ice-skating rink, a bowling alley and a Studio 54-style dance club.

The new eco-luxe 1 Hotel is a sensational debut from an innovative new brand, which will also rock Manhattan and Brooklyn this year. The 1 Hotel South Beach is an exquisite ode to nature and the environment with interiors of driftwood, stone and natural fabrics.

The walls of the green hotel are alive with tropical gardens, the guest rooms are paper- and-plastic free, the building materials are mostly recycled and a chauffeured Tesla ferries guests around town.

Boutique-style usually suggests an indie spirit, but most global brands are getting in on the act. The new Thompson Miami Beach is a towering retro-chic oceanfront resort with shimmering swimming pools and a high-energy lounge. Chef and TV personality Michelle Bernstein presides over Seagrape, the Thompson's stylish epicurean steak and seafood restaurant.



PHOTO BY ERIC LAIGNEL

The rooms and suites at the new 1 Hotel South Beach are bathed in a soft palette of neutrals. Below, the hotel's stylish Tom on Collins lobby bar and lounge.



Award-winning chef Michelle Bernstein presides over Seagrape, a stylish new Floridian brasserie at Thompson Miami Beach.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL PISARRI

Ian Schrager is the developer of The Miami Beach EDITION and Morgans New York, arguably the first boutique hotel, which opened in the 1980s.



PHOTO BY IAN SCHRAGER COMPANY



PHOTO BY VINTRO HOTEL & KITCHEN

Vintro, a new hotel brand that recently opened in Miami Beach, uses vibrant colours in its rooftop pool lounge.



PHOTO BY THOMPSON MIAMI BEACH

The airy penthouse suite at Thompson Miami Beach has views of the Atlantic Ocean and the look of a 1950s beach house.



PHOTO BY VINTRO HOTEL & KITCHEN

The bar at Vintro Hotel & Kitchen, which offers fines wines and cocktails, is a departure from the minimalist trend with its warm vintage leather loungers and wood decor.

The staggering list of South Beach/ Mid-Beach openings for 2015-2016 also includes Starwood's Aloft, AC by Marriott, Shelborne Wyndham Grand, Hyatt Centric and Nobu at Eden Roc, all boutique-style spinoffs joining the South Beach establishment of W Hotel, Hilton Bentley and Ritz-Carlton.

On the independent front for 2015, Vintro is a tiny, polished Art Deco gem with wine-themed cuisine, a colour palette of Florida citrus, a rooftop plunge pool and a shuttle for the two blocks to the beach. Nautilus by SIXTY, which also will open in Montreal soon, has lovingly transformed a 1950s treasure by architect Morris Lapidus.

The Faena District might top them all in 2016. Argentinian Alan Faena is a flamboyant Trump-

style developer who is building a hotel-condo complex where the penthouse residence already has set a Miami Beach sales record of \$50 million.

Visitors to Miami Beach surely will sleep well for another 100 years.

IF YOU GO

Info: Miamiandbeaches.com.

Hotels: The Miami Beach EDITION: Collins Ave. at 29th St., editionhotels.com;
1 Hotel South Beach: Collins Ave. at 23rd St., 1hotels.com

Thompson Miami Beach: Collins Ave. at 40th St., thompsonhotels.com;

Nautilus South Beach by SIXTY: Collins Ave. at 18th St., sixtyhotels.com.