

that palm beach cachet

To Hollywood moguls and heads of state, contemporary literary and artistic icons, old money and international businesses, the allure of this lush, tropical, emerald island is irresistible. Some of the names may have changed, but the very essence of this coveted 14-mile-long strip of paradise has not. More than the lavish parties and the ornate mansions that perpetuate Palm Beach's posh legacy, the island is rooted in the people who live here: the industrialists, socialites, civic leaders and cultural mavens who prove that Palm Beach is like nowhere else in the world.





Surprisingly, this same town that publishes a newspaper nicknamed the “Shiny Sheet” for its pictorial section heralding the rich and famous, also fancies the quaint atmosphere of its old-fashioned luncheon counter that’s catered to “regular folk” since 1937. In an afternoon at Green’s Pharmacy on North County Road, you’ll meet everyone from the mailman to local merchants, hear the local news and gossip, and enjoy one of the best grilled cheese sandwiches this side of your childhood.

Another good source for news and nosh is Sprinkles Ice Cream and Sandwich Shop, adjacent to the *Palm Beach Daily News* offices on Royal Poinciana Way, where their flavors tend to reflect the news of the day. For example, in the heat of the William Kennedy Smith scandal there was “Willie Vanilli Au Bar,” a Kahlua-based ice cream named for the night club across the street where the infamous evening began. During the Roxanne Pulitzer divorce trial, patrons surmised that things weren’t going well for the enterprising blonde when “Roxy Road” was served. And more recently, customers enjoyed “Mike

Tyscream” — chocolate ice cream sprinkled with ear-shaped gummies. Who said Palm Beachers don’t have a sense of humor?

One thing locals do not take lightly is safety. Less than four square miles, Palm Beach is one of the most well-protected towns on the planet, with three fire stations and 77 sworn personnel housed in a police station with its own underground shooting range.

Gone are the days when Palm Beach had one street-light and nine policemen. Jack Kennedy could be seen walking down the street in khakis and loafers. There were only four charity balls (now there are more than 100) and the season ended in April, when the shutters went up and most of the town closed down. Today, Palm Beach runs full-throttle year round, attracting the likes of Rod Stewart and Jimmy Buffett as residents, and countless other celebrities as frequent visitors.

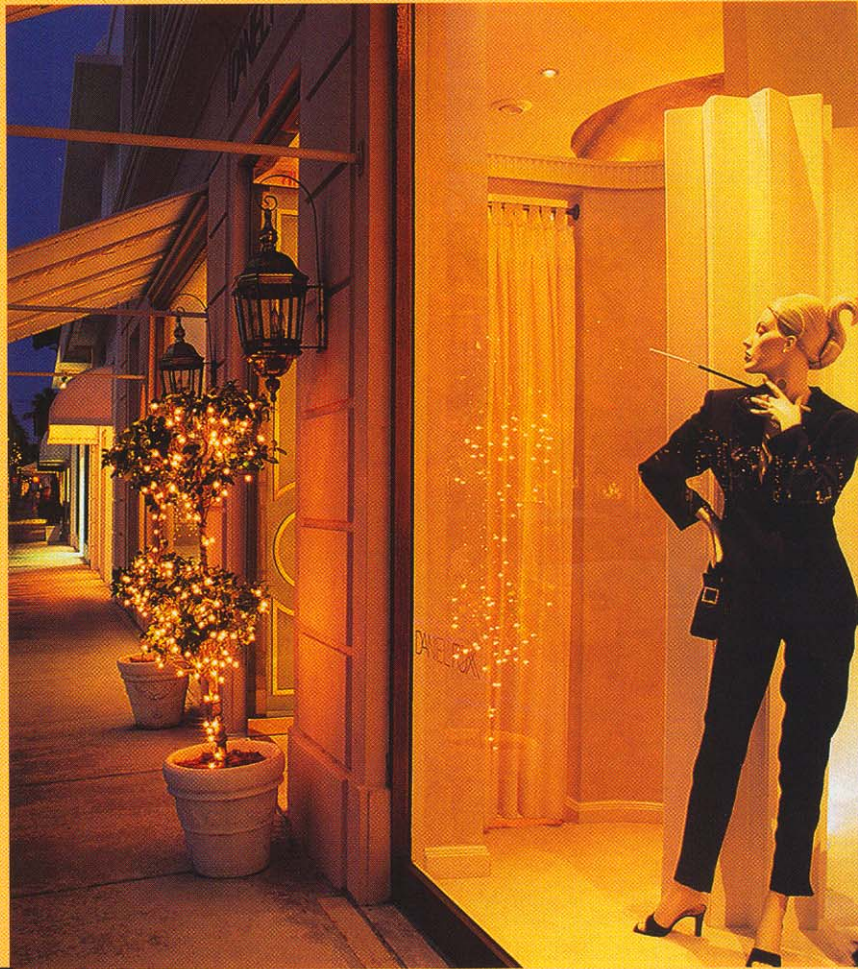
If you do happen to come during the summer when some residents escape to cooler climes, you may be fortunate enough to find a parking spot on Worth Avenue.

To many, the allure of this lush, tropical, emerald island is irresistible.

This landmark stretch features more than 200 shops selling everything from world-class designer jewelry, clothing and shoes to international art and antiques. Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to be a millionaire to shop here, and many stores offer a variety of price points.

If you want to fit in with the jet setters, however, fashion must-haves include any of the following: Chanel, Giorgio Armani, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Nantucket handbags, Stubbs & Wootton shoes, Bill Blass, Givenchy, Carolina Herrera and Lilly Pulitzer — her signature colorful prints, the only designs to originate from Palm Beach, were an instant hit in the 1960s, and have resurfaced for a new generation.

Once you've got "the look" down, get a bite to eat. Alfresco dining is a Palm Beach specialty. The corner of Royal Poinciana Way and South County Road is a popular gathering spot, with a variety of restaurants providing fine cuisine and street-side views of luxury car parades. Watch as the status symbols roll by: Mercedes-Benzes, Rolls Royces, Jaguars and



Range Rovers (for the sportier, safari-seekers). No wonder there aren't any movie theaters here — there's too much competition.

For a more impressive view, rent a bicycle and explore the bike trails that wind past the backyards of waterfront mansions along the Atlantic Ocean.

Previous spread: You'll feel as if you're trespassing, though such close proximity to these magnificent homes is perfectly legit. Not to be missed is Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago which is now open to a select club membership and various charitable events held throughout the year. You'll have to rent a helicopter (or buy a membership for \$75,000) if you want a better perspective, however, most feel satisfied with a few passes by the front gate.

The opulent estate is the former home of breakfast cereal heiress



This page: Worth Avenue shops (above) illuminate premier designer collections; visit the serene sanctuary Bethesda by the Sea (left).

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Today, Palm Beach homes run the gamut from little Bermuda-style vacation abodes built in the 1940s and '50s to 60,000-square-foot mansions with state-of-the-art gyms, theaters, wine cellars, full-size basketball courts and championship driving greens. Starter homes begin at about \$1 million — and most buyers here pay cash.

With all these luxurious amenities in the home, why would anyone need to go out? When the sun goes down, however, the cosmopolitan set likes to trip the light fantastic, whether it's at a \$200-a-plate charity ball or at one of the island's intimate after-hours haunts. You can be sure they're dressed to the nines, no matter what is planned. Remember, this is Palm Beach.

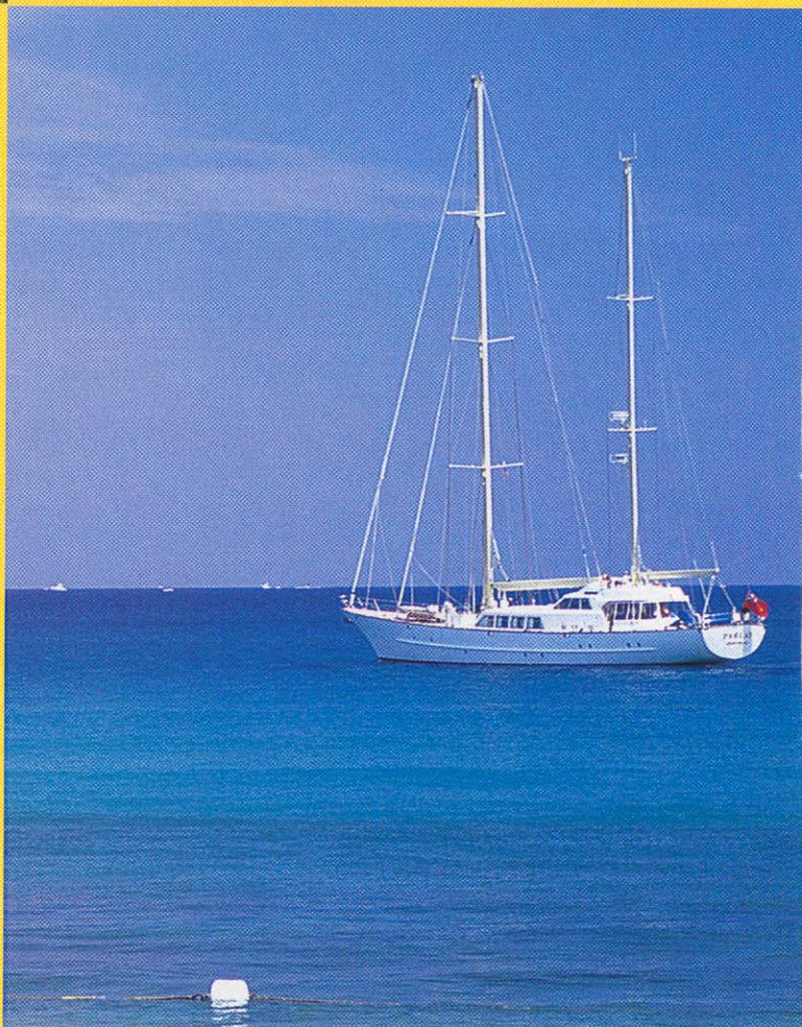
Classic venues offer vintage music and dancing, while lounges on Worth Avenue invite starry-eyed girls in search of millionaire husbands. Newer clubs, beacons for local and visiting celebs, serve up dinner and disco until the wee hours (many a famous face has

Marjorie Merriweather Post. Post spent \$8 million creating the 17-acre property on which she built a 100-plus-room mansion replete with a 75-foot high tower, a nine-hole golf course, citrus groves, greenhouses and an underground tunnel to the beach. By transforming the 55,695-square-foot home into a private club nearly a half-century later, Trump has revived the Post tradition of having one of the most envied guest lists in town.

And let's not forget Trump's former wife and crafty negotiator, Ivana. Her multi-million dollar retreat is just a few mansions away.

The former Kennedy compound is also worth seeing. Its current owner has restored the 1930s ocean-front residence to its former glory, including the front lawn where the Kennedy clan played touch football.

This page: A flock of ibis gather on branches (above) to compare sightseeing notes; while sailing the waters off Palm Beach (right), consider dropping the anchor to survey the surrounding beauty. Opposite page: The Breakers Hotel is par for the course for many.





let his or her hair down, so have your instant camera ready). Some restaurants also feature great piano bars for those who prefer their nightlife sitting down.

Lest you think Palm Beach lacks a conscience, you'll find the spiritual welfare of its denizens in capable hands. (Jealousies and indiscretions aside, Palm Beach is quick to forgive its fallen compatriots.) They have four places of worship from which to choose.

The non-denominational Royal Poinciana Chapel adjacent to the Flagler Museum is Palm Beach's first church and was modeled after a quaint New England meeting house. Across town is the modern Temple Emanu-El on North County Road, considered to be one of the finest small synagogues in the world. The much older St. Edwards Church just down the street is home of the Catholic elite, having been memorialized by the Kennedys who are among its most notable parishioners. The stained glass windows of this 1920s mini-cathedral were reportedly contributed by the Kennedys and William Randolph Hearst. Palm Beach's oldest house of worship is Bethesda-

by-the-Sea, a liberal Episcopalian church where even the rector has been known to wear white Gucci loafers. This grand Spanish-Gothic-style cathedral was built without regard for cost, and it shows. Its arched walkways and breathtaking stained glass windows have a sanctifying effect that makes one feel redeemed just by being there. If a little soul searching is all you're after, a walk through its locally famous gardens and towering banyan trees may be sufficient.

The irony of Palm Beach is the one-dimensional image that outsiders tag to it.

"Palm Beach has no memory and no one asks for credentials," confides an insider. "Truth is, if you have a tuxedo and know which fork to use, you'll be a welcome guest next season."

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