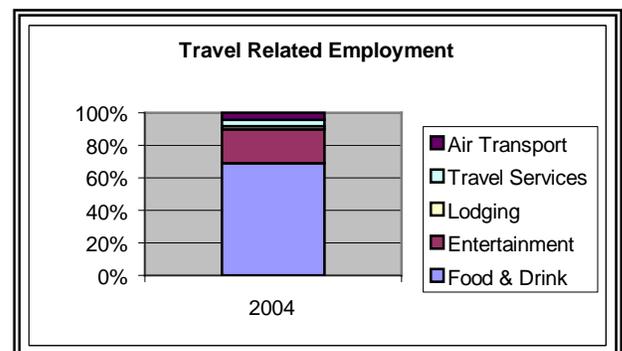
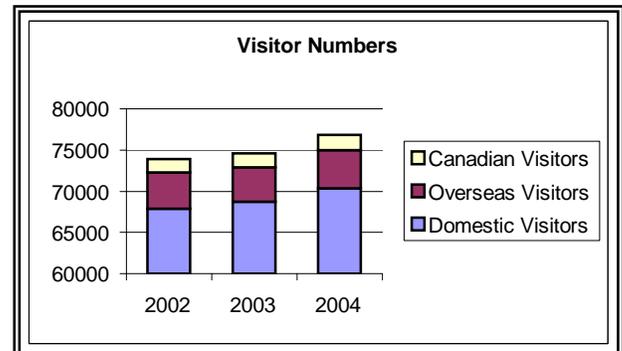


Visitors to Florida in 2004

Preliminary numbers and profiles of visitors to the Sunshine State during 2004 have been released by Visit Florida – the states’ official tourism arm. The numbers give cause for satisfaction as they show an overall increase in visitors of three percent over 2003. Approximately 76.8 million visitors made the trip by car, plane or boat – a record-breaking number. The incredible showing of the first half of the year is likely to offset any downturn as a result of the catastrophic hurricane season. It remains to be seen when the numbers are broken down what impact the influx of out of state helpers had during the latter half of the year. Overseas visitors showed the largest comparative advance in arrivals with an 11.2% increase over 2003. Canadians also had their best exodus for a few years with a 9.2% increase over 2003. The money contributed from tourism into state coffers was substantial. Taxable sales from tourism and recreation amounted to \$51,773,000 according to the Department of Revenue. “Bed Tax”, the tourist development tax levied by many counties (amount varies by county) on hotels, motels and short-term rental properties provided over \$200,000 for the State. As well as contributing in taxes, tourism supports a large part of the employment industry. In 2003 870,700 jobs were directly attributable to travel. During 2004 that peaked at 904,100, although the average was 890,700 over the year. There is no doubt however that many employees in lodging and restaurants were laid off temporarily and in some cases permanently as a result of the storms.



Passports – A UK Lifeline?

As the deadline of October 26 2005 approaches for Britain to comply with the United States directive to issue passports containing a biometric element in order to retain Visa waiver status, a lifeline has appeared. British authorities have already stated that they do not expect to meet the deadline, although they are anticipating issuing the new passports by the end of the year. The United States are reluctant to push the deadline back again because of the costs involved, but at a recent press conference the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs, Janie Jacobs stated that citizens from any of the 27 visa waiver countries with an existing machine readable passport would be "grandfathered in" until the passport expires. Anyone travelling on a new passport issued after 26th October 2005 without a biometric element would need to apply for a visa.

Crime Statistics

The figures for crimes committed during the first half of 2004 have been published by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Throughout the state as a whole the total number of recorded offences are 426,702, down 2.3% from the same period of 2003. Murder and aggravated assault are the only categories where there has actually been an increase of offences. Motor vehicle thefts were down by 7.6% from 41,517 to 38,341. (See the table on page 6)

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UK Contact Details

As part of our quest to reach and inform more owners we recently conducted a mail-out to British Owners of vacation homes in Osceola County. Why are we telling you this? Because this mail-out highlighted the reality of a potentially devastating situation. In the December issue we talked about the importance of making sure that authorities in Florida have accurate current contact details for you at your regular home address. When we had sent out our invitations we were quite surprised to receive about 2% back as returns for people who had moved or the addresses were incomplete.

We asked the department which had provided the mailing list how old the list was. The reply was as follows: The list is compiled by the recording office from lists supplied by title companies after a house has been purchased. The process takes a couple of months, and this list is then entered at the County level, taking about another month, making the data on the list about three months old. This list is then used to send out the Notice of Proposed Taxes in August and the corresponding tax bill in November. Non-payment of taxes after several years would result in the property being auctioned off on the courtroom steps as happens to many people.

Non-residents purchasing a house in Florida should always make sure that the GRANTEE's address is completed showing the full mailing address and postcode for where they want the tax bill sent. Under Florida Statutes it is the ultimate responsibility of the taxpayer to provide the current address.

A quick update on the couple we wrote about in the December issue. It would appear that on this occasion faulty paperwork on the part of the legal system, together with the lack of an accurate UK address held by the Home Owners Association was the cause. After a brief court case the property has now been returned to the rightful owner.

May we take this opportunity to thank all those who responded to this mailing.

Better Business Bureau

Just a reminder that if you have a complaint about a company that you have used, or wish to check there are no complaints about a company you are considering using, the Better Business Bureau have several offices within Florida and have a searchable nationwide database of all companies against whom complaints have been made. www.bbb.org

US Airways Returns Planes

Officials at US Airways have announced they will return 11 Boeing 737's when their lease runs out in May. As a result about 14 flights will be lost as the company continues to shed costs so it can emerge from Chapter 11 Bankruptcy protection.

Florida Homes And Travel Web Site

Keep watching our website this month as our newly revamped site relauches with a special subscriber area. Along with all the usual information in the public area, current subscribers will be able to register with a user name and password to access the subscriber's area, where the last 3 years issues will be archived. We will also make available each month the current issue, so should you accidentally mislay (or prematurely recycle) your copy, you can still access the information. The web links published within the issues will also then be click-able links. There will be a breaking news section within this area, were we will post important news that breaks between issues. The tax information will be moved into the subscriber's area and there will be a tax calculator for online use. Of course our online car booking system will still be there for use 24 hours a day, or you can phone us for a quote. Please, bear with us while we are in transition.

Taxes Due Now

A reminder that your US Tangible Personal Property tax and Property tax must be paid by March 31st 2005. On April 1st any unpaid taxes become delinquent and interest will be applied. You can check if your taxes have been paid online at your county tax collectors website.

<http://sun6.dms.state.fl.us/dor/property/taxcollectors.html>. Go to the above website and follow the links to your own county.

'Known Travelers'

The Greater Orlando Aviation Authority and the Transportation Security Administration have announced the introduction of the nation's first known traveller program operated by the private sector. Volunteers submit themselves for deeper security checks in return for expedited progress through security lanes.

St Petersburg Climate Data - March 1948- 2000

(All in degrees Fahrenheit)

The average high temp is	77.8
The average low temp is	59.9
The highest temp (on February 24, 1949)	89
The coldest night temp (on February 03, 1980)	34

Exchange Rates \$ to £

Feb 22 (high)	1.9115	Feb 08 (low)	1.8550
Jan 30 (high)	1.9194	Jan 17 (low)	1.8590
2004 High Dec 20	1.9457	2004 Low May 11	1.7552

Mortgage Rates

With zero points	Dec 27	Jan 26	Feb 25
Fixed 30 yrs	5.75%	5.62%	5.87%
Adjustable 1 yr	4.15%	4.25%	4.25%

Note: Mortgage rates are published as a service to readers to indicate trends and must not be relied on in entering into any agreement.

News Roundup

Florida has been given the highest possible credit rating by Standard & Poor, joining 9 other states on a triple A rating for the first time. Florida will have \$3 billion in reserves at the end of the fiscal year, the highest of any state. The one black cloud on Florida's otherwise sunny horizon is a problem in reducing school class sizes as required by a constitutional amendment. The population has grown by 8.9% since 2000 and that has added pressure to already pressurised schools. This is one of the reasons that so many counties are increasing the impact fees charged on new homes so drastically. However, Standard & Poor are of the opinion that the State is well positioned to manage these problems.

Grannies in Gulf Breeze are on patrol. The Police department in this Pensacola suburb are loaning out unused police cars for patrols by retirees, business people and homemakers in an effort to slow traffic down and deter reckless driving. The volunteers undergo a short course in radio use and first aid and are unable to make arrests.

A recent meeting at Disney World of head tourism honchos threw up some interesting facts. Officials from the Department of Homeland Security and tourism are well aware of the slightly negative way in which foreigners view their welcome in the U.S. but are unsure how do deal with it. Currently the Federal Government spends \$10 million on worldwide advertising. Australia spends \$250 million and Spain, \$70 million by way of comparison. Visa applications to the U.S. are down 32% since 2001 despite streamlining of the system and increases in staff numbers at consulates around the world. A poll conducted in November by research firm GMI Inc of 8,000 consumers in 8 industrialized nations found that 55% held an increasingly negative view of the U.S.

Valentine's weekend brought a red killer to the shore in Sarasota. A bloom of red tide 'a toxic alga' in the ocean off Sarasota between Lido Key and Gasparilla Island caused dead fish to wash up on the beaches and meant some visitors and local residents needed to attend medical clinics to seek attention for respiratory problems.

Haines Creek in Lake County was originally named after Captain Melton Haynes, a pioneer settler in the 1800's credited with bringing sweet oranges to the area. A clerk changed Haynes to Haines many decades ago but Lake County commissioners are backing an effort by local historian Bob Grenier to apply for restoration to the U.S. Department of Interior's Board of Geographic Names in Washington. Watch out Haines City!

ResortQuest announced fourth quarter earnings of \$37.6 million on 15th February. This was double the

earnings of the same period a year earlier. Gaylord Entertainment purchased ResortQuest for \$177 million in August 2003.

Outback Steakhouse Inc blamed increased tomato prices and weaker sales at namesake restaurants for a drop in earnings over the year from £170 million in 2003 to \$159 million in 2004.

The state Office of Insurance Regulation has announced fines totalling \$1.1 million for 91 insurance companies that failed to submit affidavits certifying efforts to settle claims quickly.

Fruitville Road in Sarasota is the location for a new Homewood Suites by Hilton. The just-opened hotel features one bed-roomed suites with full kitchen and living area suitable for longer stays.

Theme Park News: The annual fragrant experience that is the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival commences April 15th and continues through to June 5th. Epcot is in our opinion the best of the theme parks for the blooms and flowers and if you have never attended during the festival then you are missing a visual treat. The new 'Crush 'n Gusher' slide at Disney's Typhoon Lagoon is rumoured to open on March 14th. *Star Wars* fans might want to check out the *Star Wars* weekends taking place in May and June.

Following a successful launch in December, Cypress Gardens has received 250,000 visitors and sold 80,000 annual passes

A major cold front blew in over eastern Florida at the end of February, leaving more rain in Melbourne in one day than the previous record fall for a month, and a tornado in Palm Bay injured 5 and damaged 15 houses.

Average Daily Hotel Room Rate

Area	Dec	Feb
International Drive	\$90.98	\$120.67
Lake Buena Vista	\$109.30	\$127.24
Kissimmee East	\$65.47	\$90.91
Kissimmee West	\$52.41	\$57.96

Florida Lottery Winning Numbers

Date	Numbers	Winners/Jackpot	\$m
02-23-05	04-13-17-18-25-38	1	\$3m
02/19/05	07-13-26-28-34-43	1	\$14m
02/16/05	06-07-08-35-48-52	Roll	\$9m
02/12/05	03-17-19-28-33-48	Roll	\$6m
02/09/05	09-11-29-39-45-47	Roll	\$3m
02/05/05	03-05-13-15-21-26	7	\$6m
02/02/05	04-08-22-25-29-42	Roll	\$3m
01/29/05	04-14-15-30-43-50	1	\$10m
01/26/05	01-10-12-22-32-35	Roll	\$6m
01/22/05	07-24-33-35-40-43	Roll	\$3m
01/19/05	15-19-22-32-41-51	1	\$14m

Numbers are obtained from the Florida Lottery (www.flalottery.com) as a service to readers. We cannot accept liability for any errors.

Homeowner News

A La Carte Management Company has officially closed leaving some owners thousands of dollars out of pocket. Here is an extract from the email sent by proprietors Robert and Carol Allen to their homeowners. "It is with deep regret that we inform you that A La Carte Florida Vacation Villa Inc. is closing". This email was only recently sent, however, the official filing for bankruptcy was made on October 1st. We spoke to one lucky subscriber who managed to extricate himself with minimal losses, who alleged that A La Carte was still appearing to operate at the end of 2004.

Brevard County Tourist Development council has voted to increase its Tourist Tax rate from 4% to 5%. The increase could raise as much as \$1.4 million for the county to use in a variety of ways, such as beach renourishment, to help attract more tourists. The matter will be presented to the Board of County commissioners later this month for approval.

Users of E-PASS and SunPass systems in their cars will in future be able to use the prepaid toll scheme to pay for airport parking at Orlando International Airport. Specially designated entrance and exit lanes to the car park have been opened and the correct fee will simply be deducted from the E-PASS/SunPass account.

A parcel of land suitable for development comprising just 12.1 acres has finally been sold for a staggering \$4.9 million or \$405,000 per acre. The land is one of the last available for development between Walt Disney World and Celebration and sits within 195 acres already owned by the buyer. Tandy O Lafland, president of Intergroup Cos, Houston told GlobeST.com that he planned a 250 Unit condo community on the site. The Parkway, as the area is known will ultimately comprise 1000 hotel rooms, 288 condo's, 1,150 timeshare units, retail and restaurant space and a large equestrian-themed tourist attraction.

We know that many owners like to create a games room within the underused space in the garage at their villa. This work does require a permit, and fire regulations state that there must still be a door or large window for exiting in an emergency!

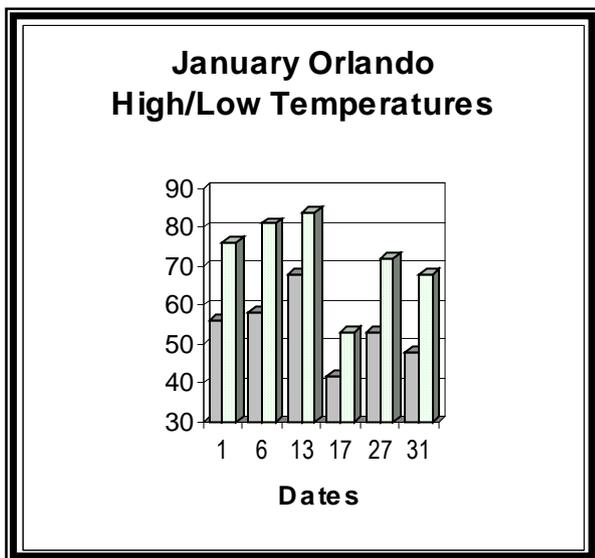
Following a request for clarification regarding the provision and use of Bar-B-Que's in Florida. According to the fire code NFPA101 BBQ units need to be at least 3 to 5ft away from a home or screen enclosure. The same applies to electric BBQ units. Charcoal, and lighter fluid must not be kept in the home; propane tanks cannot be stored in the garage but can be out in the pool area.

Groundbreaking has begun on a new vacation home subdivision of 972 townhomes and condos just 10 minutes from Disney near the junction of I 4 and US 27 close to Reunion Resort and Club and ChampionsGate. Sonesta Orlando at Tierra del Sol Resort has presold 625 of the 972 townhouses and condos that will be built on 122 acres of rolling hills. Prices for the homes start a \$300,000 and apparently the resort boasts the highest elevation for miles permitting views to the theme parks. A \$43,000 amenity package comprising of Clubhouse with concierge, restaurants, theatre, shops, spa and fitness centre, and a water park will be managed along with the entire resort by Sonesta International Hotels Corporation of Boston. Sonesta Hotels manages upscale hotels, resorts and cruises. The resort is being developed by American Leisure Holdings – Vacation Homes Division.

Two new Active Adult communities have been opened by Levitt & Sons of the Levitt Corporation. Cascades of World Golf Village, St Augustine's offers 450 single family homes (starting prices in low-mid \$200,000's), 2 championship golf courses, theatre, resort hotels, a town centre etc. The second community is slightly larger, offering nearly 1,000 units at Cascades at Groveland in Lake County, but slightly less upscale with prices starting in the high \$100,000's and a nine-hole pitch 'n putt golf course.

The blue tarps provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for covering damaged roofs were not designed to be left in place for as long as is proving to be necessary for some homeowners. The tarps are becoming brittle under repeated exposure to the sun and beginning to perish. FEMA will not be issuing new tarps, so what to do? Step up Lamar Advertising Co of Baton Rouge, LA. Lama are donating used vinyl bill board adverts to the charity United Way for replacing the tarps, as the ads are designed to withstand Florida weather without perishing.

Of the 5,000 short-term rental properties in Polk County Polk County have UK addresses for the owners of 3,344 properties.



Insurance Roundup

The four devastating hurricanes last year occurring within six weeks of each other, threw up some problems with current insurance procedures that have been in practise since changes were made following Hurricane Andrew in 1992. A Joint Select Committee on Hurricane Insurance was set up on January 5 2005 to study all aspects of the property insurance market and in particular hurricane deductibles, and Citizens Property Insurance Corporation (Citizens).

The Committee came up with 20 recommendations for reforms to Insurance law for presentation to the legislature, which reconvenes this month. As we have seen in previous years, many recommendations are made, but following examination and debate in the legislature, few make it through to be signed into law. However, it is still interesting to note the reforms that are proposed – if only to show that notice has been taken of the particular problems that transpired and affected many subscribers.

In respect of Hurricane Deductibles, the key proposals relate to requiring insurers to offer both annual and per event deductibles to condo associations and commercial properties. To retain the mandatory annual hurricane deductible for homeowner policies. (From May 1st 2005 all new residential policies apply the deductible on an annual basis for all hurricanes within a calendar year rather than per event). Proposals require insurers to specify and prominently display the dollar value of percentage hurricane deductibles on renewal notices along with a standard disclosure form explaining what is and is not covered, principal limitations on coverage and methods for determining the value of damage.

Citizens is the “insurer of last resort” and cover is only available here when no other commercial offer is made. Citizens is particularly active in coastal areas where windstorm damage can be significant and threats from hurricanes severe. With 814,081 policyholders as of 31st January 2005, Citizens is the second largest insurer in Florida. Citizens’ policies are split into 3: - Personal Lines (homeowners, mobile homeowners, condo unit owners etc); Commercial Lines (condo associations, homeowner associations etc) and High Risk Accounts (windstorm only policies where normal insurance covers every thing else). This last category is the largest with 455,809 policies. The recommendations by the committee in regard to Citizens refer to reform of the Corporation to allow and encourage performance and execution of duties in a responsible and effective way as any other large entity would rather than the slightly backwater Government department that Citizens appeared to be after the hurricane season. The reforms, if adopted, will not make any difference to premiums as these are required by law to remain the highest, but should provide better, speedier service for the individual policy holder.

Villas with attractive planting in the garden are a pleasure to see, but if owners aren’t in residence to do the watering – what can be planted? The answer is to stick to native plants that are used to the subtropical weather conditions. Depending on the size of your property and the proximity of neighbours here are a couple of trees for your consideration. First up, for the smaller area is the Orange Geiger Tree (*Cordia sebestena*) a slight evergreen with showy clusters of orange flowers throughout the year that attract butterflies. The tree grows at a medium rate to about 20feet tall with a 25-foot canopy. Sited in full sun, it lives for about 50 years, likes well-drained soil and has a low water requirement once it is established.

A larger specimen is the Gumbo Limbo (*Bursera simaruba*) also known as the “tourist tree” for its peeling copper coloured bark! The Gumbo Limbo only partially loses leaves in the winter, and grows to 40 feet tall, with a canopy of 20 – 40 feet. It is a medium to fast grower with a life expectancy of over 50 years. Once again its water requirements are minimal once established and adapts well to sandy soil – particularly in southern Florida.

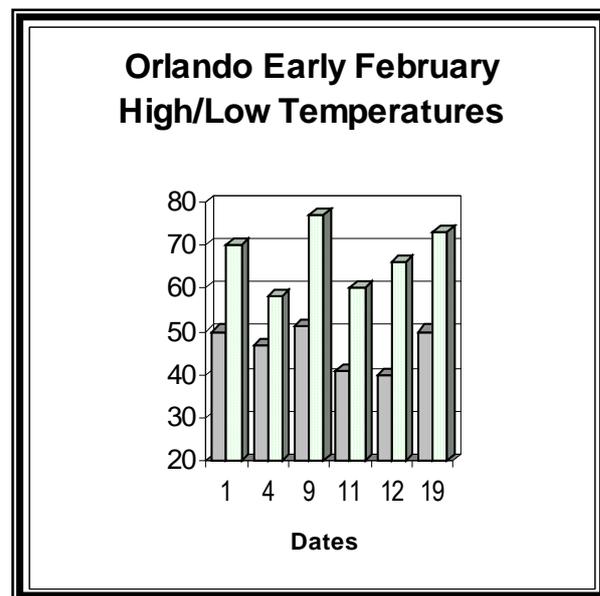
If full trees are too large for your plot, then consider the sweet acacia (*Acacia farnesiana*) a medium size thorny bush with little yellow scented puffball flowers. The Acacia grows reasonably quickly in well-drained soil, and can tolerate a drought but it will look better if planted within reach of the sprinkler system. Acacias also attract bees and butterflies.

Useful Numbers and Addresses in this issue.

www.bbb.org - the Better Business Bureau

<http://sun6.dms.state.fl.us/dor/property/taxcollectors.html>. To check tax payments

www.myfloridalicense.com. To check Licenses or permits.



Internet Marketing

A reminder for everyone who uses internet marketing to gain rentals to spend a little time thinking about how to compose the reply to an enquiry. First impressions are everything, so the initial email should convey everything you wish the potential renter to know about you and your home.

We were recently looking for a home in the Cape Coral/Port Charlotte area to stay in for a week at Easter. After a little online research we started sending emails out to owners of 3 and 4 bedroom homes, over the course of a month we probably sent close to 150 emails (yes, sitting going through large villa advertising sites over a weekend sending emails to everything that appeals – just like any other tourists) and received replies from fewer than 30! Most of those instilled no confidence for us to book as they were just 5 or 6 words long or the grammar and spelling was awful. “Yes, I have your dates available” was quite usual. One hypothesis given to us as explanation for this lack of replies was perhaps they had suffered damage in the hurricanes, our response to that is that we will not consider their houses next time, whereas the responses we received that we liked have been filed for future examination.

Now we do not pretend to have the perfect reply to an enquiry, but we do know that first impressions last so any time spent on this must be well spent. Are there any advertising people out there willing to share your knowledge with us? One other interesting thing to note... whilst in Central Florida we offer mostly inclusive rates covering taxes, cleans etc, in the Cape Coral/Port Charlotte area it seems to be the accepted norm that whatever the house size the quote refers to two person occupancy, with an extra sum per guest, then tax, then cleaning, then electricity for the week, not to mention the pool heat. It meant one needed calculator in hand to work out the value of each offer – keep it simple.

Licensed Contractors

We know that some subscribers are still attempting to find contractors, please let us know if you have used a company for repairs or alterations to your house and were happy enough with their service then we can pass on their contact details.

Please, please, also remember that contractors must be licensed by the county and the State and hold the correct certificate from the Construction Industry Licensing Board for the specific area of work you wish them to carry out: - A roof needs a licensed roofing contractor, a general building contractor will not do. Using unlicensed contractors can result in a fine of up to \$5,000. Check the license of your prospective contractor at www.myfloridalicense.com.

Theme Park Attendance

Most theme parks keep actual attendance numbers rather secret, perhaps they don’t want tourists to know how much profit they make on tickets in a year. “Amusement Business”, the industries major trade publication comprises annual figures that are widely respected for their accuracy. Attendance in 2004 was vastly improved on 2003 when growth was almost entirely flat. The order of the top ten American theme parks has not changed over the 2 years, but the average daily visitors to the Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World - the worlds most popular theme park - have increased from 38,000 per day to 41,000. If you think the queues are longer than before, you are right, they are!

Theme Park	2003 Visitors	2004 Visitors
Magic Kingdom	14m	15.2m
DisneyLand, California	12.7m	13.4m
Epcot	8.6m	9.4m
Disney MGM	7.8m	8.3m
Disney’s Animal Kingdom	7.3m	7.8m
Universal Studios, Orlando	6.8m	6.7m
Islands of Adventure	6.0m	6.3m
Disney’s California Adventure	5.3m	5.6m
SeaWorld Florida	5.2m	5.6m
Universal Studios, Hollywood	4.5m	5.0m

Crime Figures By County (Cont from pg 1)

County	2003 Total	% Change	Agg Assault	Motor Vehicle Theft
Broward	36,355	+2.2	3,309	3,426
Charlotte	2,611	-5.5	223	136
Collier	4,322	-11.2	538	218
Dade	81,139	-3.8	7,820	9,509
Duval	25,779	+2.3	2,048	2,406
Hernando	2,743	-11.2	372	119
Lake	4,174	+7.2	651	278
Lee	10,482	+7.6	991	994
Manatee	8,454	+4.7	953	577
Monroe	2,386	-7.4	155	176
Orange	31,352	+4.5	3,399	3,128
Osceola	5,264	+4.0	427	307
Pasco	7,633	+5.0	647	499
Polk	11,855	-7.6	882	826
Sarasota	7,443	-2.5	535	378

Relaxing Spas

Taking a trip to your Florida home is always something to look forward to. But one thing about homeownership is that there are always jobs to be done around the house. Broken or missing items must be replaced, little upgrades provided, and possibly even a spot of decorating or repair work. It can feel as if you have spent half your vacation working. Our tip is to get away somewhere different for a couple of days – or even just a long daytrip and where better for some serious relaxation and pampering but a spa?

Sanibel Harbour Resort and Spa is located right on the coast at Fort Myers, overlooking Sanibel and Captiva islands. It is approximately 25 minutes from Fort Myers airport, or roughly 180 miles from the Orlando area. This beautiful resort, renovated in 2003, has a 13-slip marina and fishing pier. The entrance halls feature marble floors and water sculptures. The treatment rooms are tastefully decorated in relaxing hues and some treatments can even be taken outdoors. Imagine a soothing massage in that glorious sun. There are many different packages available, all of which include full use of the Spa's fitness centre facilities for the durations, starting with half-day packages at \$170, going up to a full 2-night, 3-day package in a magnificent water view room, your choice of 2, 50 minute spa treatments, breakfast daily and exclusive guest benefits for \$455 per person from May 16th to October 15th. Full details and inviting photos can be found at www.sanibel-resort.com.

Maybe you don't have the time to spare for travelling as far as Fort Myers, an equally rejuvenating experience can be found at **Grande Lakes, Orlando**, home to the Ritz- Carlton and JW Marriott hotels. There are 40,000 sumptuous square feet of spa dedicated to relaxation. Treatments here feature the legacy and traditions of the Carita-La Maison de Beauté, Paris. One signature treatment is: Tuscan Citrus Cure; "The experience begins with a citrus scrub and a Zesty lime shower to prepare the body. An aromatic massage using Italian extracts of bergamot, green mandarin and lemon reawakens the senses, then a hydro soak in an aqua latte milk concoction followed by a sweet orange body wrap hydrates thirsty skin". 80 minutes of pure heaven for just \$320! There are many other treatments including more reasonable citrus manicures or pedicures, facial peels, vitamin facials, men's hot towel facial etc for under \$100. There is a private lap pool, healing waters and fitness centre, as well as spa café with healthy food. As the resort is also home to an 18-hole, par-72 Greg Norman Signature Golf Course, next time your partner wishes to slip off for a game of golf, you can suggest you go along for the ride. Full details of both the spa and the golf course can be found at www.grandelakes.com.

Fine Dining

When you are travelling to Florida more than once a year, one can soon get to feel a little jaded with steak, ribs, wings, burgers and buffets! We are often asked for new places to try where a different experience (and food) may be had. We do try to review restaurants as we come upon them, but here is a collection of a few places that come highly recommended by respected restaurant critics within Florida.

Christini's Ristorante Italiano

7600 Dr Phillips Blvd, (off Sand Lake Road, west of I Drive) \$50 - \$70 complete meal for two.

House specials include:

Dalla Sardegna Costata D'Agnello M.P.

A Rack of Lamb seasoned with fine herbs and served with Balsamic - Mint sauce

Cotoletta Di Maiale

Roasted centercut pork chop, over herbed rice, with sun dried cherries and port wine

Branzino Alla Christini M.P.

Pan seared Chilean Sea Bass, served over shrimp and lobster risotto topped with tarragon and fine herb sauce

Currently in its 21st year, Christini's is the result entirely of owner and founder Chris Christini. Celebrity diners at this restaurant include Michael Douglas, Henry (The Fonz) Winkler and the chap from K9. Christini's has 6 fine dining awards relating to the standard of both food and wine.

Manuel's on the 28th

390 N. Orange Ave, Suite 2800

Over \$85 for a meal for two, Jackets preferred and reservations essential. Tel. 407.246.6580

House specials include:

Asparagus Speared Ahi Tuna

Wild Rice Risotto - Jumbo Lump Crab Hollandaise - Lobster Oil

Grilled Chicken Bastien

Bacon Shallot Veloute - Celeriac Mashed Potatoes - Petites Vegetables

Five Peppercorn Angus Filet Mignon

Smoked Gouda Dauphinoise Potatoes - Dijon Thyme Aioli

Floor to ceiling glass windows in this restaurant located on top of the Bank of America building provide stunning views over Orlando's vibrant downtown. Reidel glassware, Lenox china, art deco lamps, rich colours and exotic flowers set the scene for the beautifully presented platters. AAA give 4 diamonds to Manuel's.

And Finally...

Don't miss "Mustangs and Mustangs...Legends Havin' Fun" at Fantasy of Flight on April 8th – 10th. The only event that unites Ford Mustangs and Mustang Warbirds from WWII. www.fantasyofflight.com
Admission is \$24.95 for adults and \$13.95 for Children

Learning the Lessons of the Past

Let us hope that the engineers in charge of the Florida Turnpike Western Beltway 429 construction have learned the hard and costly lessons of an infamous engineer of the 1980's. He designed a toll plaza in Lantana using a map from the 1950's. Unfortunately, during the intervening years, a drainage canal had been constructed, and the plaza was designed to sit two feet into the canal! Florida's Turnpike officials then had to spend \$319,000 re-routing the canal.

Let us also hope tourism officials were paying attention when Florida's State of Economic Development published a promotional poster of a Floridian beach scene in 1988 only to discover that the featured beach was actually in California.

The crime figures on page 6 reflect a drop in crime overall, this is not the only time crime figures have gone down. In 1996 crime fell by 1.7 percent as proudly announced by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. It was later discovered by the Palm Beach Post that 20 jurisdictions had failed to submit their 1996 crime statistics on time. The agency had calculated that the 314,231 residents in those places had experienced no crime.

Pity the Sheriff's Department in Broward County during the late 80's – they had to manufacture their own crack cocaine rocks for use in sting operations because they couldn't obtain enough on the streets. Also 2 agents in Miami supposed to be lecturing about the evil of drugs were arrested on cocaine charges.

Florida Homes And Travel Car Hire

Rates through March

*** Special Offer – Compact 4 Door from £132 per week***

	Fully Inclusive Weekly	Fully Inclusive Daily	Platinum Cover Weekly	Platinum Cover Daily
Economy 4 Door	£128	£23	£138	£26
Compact 4 Door	£132	£25	£142	£27
Intermediate 4 Door	£151	£27	£161	£29
Full Size 4 Door	£171	£30	£181	£32
Premium 4 Door	£188	£36	£198	£38
Luxury 4 Door	£207	£37	£217	£39
Convertible 2 Door	£207	£37	£217	£39
4 Wheel Drive	£199	£45	£209	£47
Luxury 7 Seater	£199	£37	£209	£39
Minivan 8 Seater	£215	£48	£225	£50

These rates are subject to change 2 door models are available – please see our website or call for prices

Please call 0500 50 50 87 for more details or email elle@floridahomesandtravel.com

We accept Visa, MasterCard, Switch/Maestro and Solo

Dollar or Alamo Cars

***Previous cost - £142/£152**

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 Florida Homes & Travel, FREEPOST SCE 15595, LIPHOOK, GU30 7BR UK
 Tel: 0500 505087.Or: 01428 741438 To Phone from the US: 01144 1428 741438

