

# FLORIDA

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## HOMES AND TRAVEL

June 2007

## Annual Property Management Survey

This month sees the publication of the 17<sup>th</sup> Florida Homes and Travel Property Management Survey. Originally started back in 1991 to provide a snapshot of each of our subscribers property management companies, based on subscriber's opinions, the survey has now become about much more than just management companies. It now embraces all aspects of managing your Florida Villa, from the advertising budget you spend, to the utility bills you pay and even to the amount of time your villa consumes when you visit – an average of 9.5 days out of two weeks as you ask – as well as all the usual indispensable information about over 100 different management companies. As the survey forms arrived this spring, we gained the impression that subscribers had fewer complaints about their management companies last year, and this was borne out by the highest ever overall satisfaction score of 1.83. This was especially interesting as owners generated fewer rentals last year – 23.00 rental weeks compared with 29.66 in 2005. This could have generated large-scale disappointment with management companies for not providing more rentals (and did for some owners) even though the MC's themselves actually generated 29.37 weeks in 2006 when working alone. However, clearly, this was not the case and only 11 subscribers actually parted company with their MC, compared with 19 in 2005. You will find all the facts and figures in the complimentary survey, which accompanies this issue.

The big name chain restaurants dominated your submissions in the Favourite Restaurant category, and the Outback Steakhouse ran away with first position. We have included a list of some of the coastal recommendations that didn't make it into the Top 10 on page 7 so you could try somewhere different if you are in the area.

### Hurricanes 2007

Hurricane season is upon us again, and predictions are that last year's quiet season really was a blip – expect more activity this year!

Experts at the NOAA Climate Prediction Center are projecting a 75 percent chance that the Atlantic Hurricane Season will be above normal this year—showing the ongoing active hurricane era remains strong.

"For the 2007 Atlantic hurricane season, NOAA scientists predict 13 to 17 named storms, with seven to 10 becoming hurricanes, of which three to five could become major hurricanes of Category 3 strength or higher," said retired Navy Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. An average Atlantic hurricane season brings 11 named storms, with six becoming hurricanes, including two major hurricanes.

Climate patterns responsible for the expected above normal 2007 hurricane activity continue to be the ongoing multi-decadal signal (the set of ocean and atmospheric conditions that spawn increased Atlantic hurricane activity), warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean and the El Niño/La Niña cycle. Continued on page 2

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Last year, seasonal hurricane predictions proved to be too high when an unexpected El Niño rapidly developed and created a hostile environment for Atlantic storms to form and strengthen. When storms did develop, steering currents kept most of them over the open water and away from land.

"There is some uncertainty this year as to whether or not La Niña will form, and if it does how strong it will be," said Gerry Bell, Ph.D., lead seasonal hurricane forecaster at the NOAA Climate Prediction Center. "The Climate Prediction Center is indicating that La Niña could form in the next one to three months. If La Niña develops, storm activity will likely be in the upper end of the predicted range, or perhaps even higher depending on how strong La Niña becomes. Even if La Niña does not develop, the conditions associated with the ongoing active hurricane era still favor an above-normal season."

Bell also noted that pre-season storms, such as Subtropical Storm Andrea in early May, are not an indicator of the hurricane season ahead. "With or without Andrea, NOAA's forecast is for an above normal season."

## From the Editor

We hope you enjoy browsing through this year's survey, and thank all those who took the time to return their forms. Your free one month subscription extension for returning your form will be added to all current subscribers during June, so next month you will see that reflected in your subscriber number.

Please check our car hire announcement on page-10 that pre-registration at Orlando is now open.

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## Fort Myers Climate Data – June - 1948- 2000 (All in degrees Fahrenheit)

The average high temp is 90.6°  
The average low temp is 72.4°  
The highest temp (on June 16<sup>th</sup> 1981) 103°  
The coldest night temp (on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1984) 60°

## Average Florida Mortgage Rates

With zero points	Mar	April	May
Fixed 30 yrs	6.10%	6.47%	6.60%
Adjustable 1 yr	6.41%	6.38%	6.50%

Note: Mortgage rates are published as a service to readers to indicate trends and must not be relied on in entering into any agreement. Source: [www.hsh.com](http://www.hsh.com)

## How to Reach Florida Homes and Travel

### Editor

Elle Hubbard

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# Florida Homes and Travel

June 2007

## News Roundup

**Construction work** has begun on the third Hilton Grand Vacations Club timeshare resort in the Orlando area. The project will include, 1,200 units spread through 7 phases, with 141 one and two bedroom timeshare apartments in the first phase.

**A study released** by Pricewaterhouse-Coopers for the American Resort Development Association has shown that timeshares within Florida supported 161,100 full and part-time jobs, worth \$5.4 billion in salaries, wages and related incomes during 2005. Florida leads the nation with 378 timeshare resorts comprising 47,400 units. The study also found that 7.9 million people took about 1.8 million vacations during 2005 spending an average of \$2,062 per trip per party, resulting in an estimated spend of \$3.7 billion.

**The Division of Emergency Management** reported that 228 wildfires raged in 55 out of 67 counties in Florida during May and many were expected to still be burning themselves out in June. In mid- May more than 81,000 acres had been burned.

**If you think the scenery** has changed somehow next time you land at Sanford airport you're right! Over 200 trees that could provide nesting or perching sites for eagles are being removed in a contraversial effort to prevent the birds from frequenting the airport and potential collisions.

Subscriber Malcolm Crawford sent this snippet from Air Transport World – May 11<sup>th</sup>:-

**Air Transport Assn.** is seeking the assistance of the White House in a dispute with the Dept. of Homeland Security over the collection of biometric information on non-US citizens. Currently, DHS requires foreign visitors to submit to fingerprinting when they arrive in the US. Now it intends to mandate fingerprinting when visitors leave the country as well. However, in a decision Air Transport Assn. President and CEO James May described as inexplicable, "DHS intends to saddle airlines with that responsibility," according to a letter from May to Frances Townsend, assistant to the president for homeland security and counterterrorism. May charged that "the entry-exit information collection system has always been a federal responsibility." Additionally, he said, forcing airlines to fingerprint passengers "will impose new burdens on airlines and their customers at airports at a time when carriers are working hard to simplify, and thereby ease, passenger check in."

**Tourists were held** at gunpoint three times in one week on International Drive, during May. Police arrested 5 men connected with one attack, outside a store, but said they were not responsible for the other attacks at I-Drive hotels one of which included the rape of German lady.

### MoneyCorp U.S. Dollar Update

The US had some positive data recently in the form of New Homes. Sales surged higher by 16.2%, well above expectations and the highest for 14 years. This certainly stopped the USD rout in its tracks but the pound has managed to stay relatively steady since the news hit the wires. This news is what USD buyers should be wary of as it reduces the chances for interest rate cuts in the US and makes the road back to \$2 that much more rocky. In fact a new gang on the block is even calling for a sharp fall towards \$1.85 during the second half of the year. Even so, with interest rates in the UK, we may yet see another run at the high \$1.9/2 levels, however buyers of the Dollar should nevertheless exercise caution by covering some of their requirement now.

**Subscribers** to Florida Homes and Travel who open a Trading Facility will have Moneycorp's £15 fee waived for all transactions they complete with them and will receive a Privilege Card entitling them to commission free currency and a 1% improvement on the exchange rate at any of the TTT Moneycorp currency exchange bureaux locations.

### Average Daily Hotel Room Rate

Area	Apr 06	Apr 07
International Drive	\$116.80	\$118.17
Lake Buena Vista	\$134.98	\$141.95
Kissimmee East	\$82.37	\$88.31
Kissimmee West	\$59.44	\$62.85



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# Florida Homes and Travel

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## Homes

**The Democrats and the Republicans** are now closer to reaching an agreement regarding property taxes in the upcoming special session of the legislature starting on June 12<sup>th</sup>. House Speaker Marco Rubio has dropped his insistence on replacing property taxes with a sales tax increase, and is instead promoting an 80% exemption for homesteaded properties, and exemptions for non-homesteaded properties, although he is refusing to comment on how much that exemption will be. The Democrats have announced they tentatively support an increase to 50% for the homestead exemption and 25% for non-homesteaded properties. Some State Senators have also shown support for this type of tax cutting plan.

**The City Council of Neptune Beach,** Jacksonville, is to hold a public hearing on an ordinance to ban short-term rentals of less than 28 days. If the limit is approved then Jacksonville Beach will be the only remaining municipality of the three beach municipalities to allow short-term rentals.

**The number of foreclosures** in Florida were the second highest in the country in April with 14,318 properties going in to some stage of foreclosure. Nationally foreclosures are up by 62% over April 2006.

**The price of electricity** from Jacksonville city utility JEA will go up 20% over the next 4 years, at the same time as a fuel adjustment charge is going up.

**Following last** months article on the 'facility' for declaring previously undeclared overseas property to HM Revenue and Customs, we have a clarification. A non-rental property does not require declaration but there is a caveat. If you have a U.S. bank account that has received

income in the form of interest, this must be declared in the foreign income section of your UK tax return. If this has not been done you can use the current 'facility' to declare the interest. If the sum is less than £2,500 there will be no penalty, but according to the nice people at the tax office – it must still be declared!

**Luxury homebuilder** Toll Brothers, of Horsham, PA, is facing lawsuits in Collier County alleging violation of local, State and National building codes in the construction of Lake Arrowhead condominiums in the Naples Lake Country Club development. The defects are not easily apparent to the untrained eye as they are hidden by components or finishes, so homeowners bought the condo's and are now facing huge repair bills through their homeowner association assessment fees. The defects listed in the lawsuit include cracks in floors, slabs, lanai slabs and walkways, the building exterior, windowsills and trims, improper stucco installation, defects in air conditioning installation and failing to install proper fire doors. Toll Brothers is facing a similar lawsuit in Orange County that was filed in April as well as complaints of shoddy construction and code violations in Virginia, Massachusetts, Connecticut and other states.

**A report by the U.S.** Government Accountability Office (GAO) has stated that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are failing to meet US Privacy laws because it refuses to disclose details of how airline passenger data is held and used. The data concerning passengers names, addresses, credit card details and travel itinerary are required by federal aviation laws to be submitted by all airlines, for passengers travelling to, or within the U.S. The resulting risk assessment is currently kept for 40 years, so CBP can track the patterns of travellers or groups of travellers. The lack of disclosure regarding privacy is at the heart of re-negotiations between Europe and the US over an agreement to share passenger data, which expires in July.

**Alluding** to the frugal nature of everybody's pocket in Florida at present, Governor Crist trimmed \$459 million in spending from the State Budget before signing the \$71.5 billion plan.

**Florida Finesse Property** and Management Inc, and Villa4uFlorida are the latest management companies to attain the Polk County Seal of Compliance. The award is recognition by the Polk County Tax Collectors office that the company has demonstrated it meets or exceeds industry specific criteria relating to tax compliance and good business standing.

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# Florida Homes and Travel

June 2007

## Insurance

During the hurricane seasons of 2004 & 2005 there was much anecdotal evidence that 'appurtenant structures' – pool screens to you and I – caused a lot of structural damage whilst flying around unrestrained. Last years legislature required a study to be completed to examine the damage actually done by such structures. The study has now been published and confirms that external structures are extremely vulnerable, but Aluminum structures are the most problematic. The study found that engineers do not design these structures and when they fail it is usually catastrophically, which increases insurance losses. It is likely that a building code will now be designed for these structures to reduce future insurance costs.

**Citizens** has received approval for its plan to remove sinkhole coverage from its base policy in all 67 counties. It will be included as an endorsement, which can be deselected in 65 counties for a reduction. In Hernando and Pasco counties, those most affected in the state by sink holes, the endorsement will not be included in renewals, but can be added – for a fee. This action should see some reductions in premiums for other policyholders.

**Florida's No-Fault** auto insurance law is to 'sunset' on October 1<sup>st</sup> reducing the price of auto insurance premiums according to insurance companies. The no-fault law required \$10,000 of Personal Injury Protection coverage be carried by all drivers to be paid out in the event of an accident regardless of whose fault the accident was. For the four in ten Floridians involved in accidents without health insurance, this is not such a good thing.

**The long awaited** insurance premium reductions of 24%, on average, continue to fail to materialize. One State Farm customer has seen his premium increase from \$1,800 to \$2,500 despite the 7% drop State Farm has filed. This is because it had already received approval for a 51% hike! Other homeowners are being dropped, seeking coverage from Citizens; their policy is then bought out by a company entering the Florida market that then drops the policy again, so they must return to Citizens. Meanwhile because insurance companies are now purchasing cheaper re-insurance through the state, this has opened up the State (and therefore all homeowners) to huge losses if the worst happens and Florida experiences a repeat of 2004 or 2005 hurricanes before enough revenue has built up in the reinsurance pot.

## First Quarter Home Prices 07

In the first quarter of 2007 Florida's housing market continued to mirror the national pattern, with higher inventory levels of homes for sale, median prices edging down and soft sales reflecting a buyers market in many areas.

Statewide, sales of single-family existing homes totaled 33,748 during the first quarter, a decrease of 26% compared to 45,844 in the same period of 2006 according to figures released by the Florida Association of Realtors®

The statewide median sales price was \$237,000 in the first quarter, a year ago it was \$243,500, a decrease of 3%. In the first quarter of 2002 the statewide median sales price was \$129,600, which reflects an increase of about 82.9% over the 5-year period.

District (MSA)	Median Price	%Change 06-07
Daytona Beach	\$204,400	-8%
Fort Lauderdale	\$366,900	-
Fort Myers/Cape Coral	\$264,900	-6%
Fort Pierce/Port St Lucie	\$240,000	-8%
Fort Walton Beach	\$215,900	-5%
Lakeland/Winter Haven	\$174,000	1%
Melbourne/Titusville	\$215,500	-9%
Miami	\$386,300	2%
Naples/Marco Island*	\$527,600	-1%
Orlando	\$257,400	-
Panama City	\$198,100	-10%
Pensacola	\$163,200	1%
Punta Gorda	\$197,300	-13%
Sarasota/Bradenton	\$290,500	-12%
Tampa/St Petes/Clearwater	\$212,200	-2%
West Palm Beach/Boca Rtn	\$378,200	-4%
Statewide	\$237,000	-3%

\*Figures for Naples were not available

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### Salt Water Swimming Pools

Although salt water pools have been around for a long time, evolution of the technology involved has meant that many homeowners are now investing in a salt water pool. But what is this, and how does it work?

Sea water has a salt content of around 35,000 parts per million (ppm), humans have a salt taste threshold of 3,500 ppm. Ideally a salt water pool will contain around 3,000 ppm. So why the salt you ask? Salt chlorinators turn salt into chlorine using a charge of electricity put into the saline solution via anodes and electrodes. This disturbs the molecular balance of the saline solution and creates chlorine. Because this is within the water, this instantaneously transforms into Hypochlorous acid, which is what happens when any type of chlorine is added to water.

The salt in the water leaves skin and hair soft, more like a good shower, not that very dry, parched feeling that usually accompanies swimming in an "added" chlorine pool. The salt can't be tasted because the amounts are below our taste thresholds, and swimmers don't get itchy red eyes (caused by the chemicals needed to balance the water in an "added" chlorine pool). This is great news for kids and those who like to swim underwater. Users also report that the water itself feels very soft as you swim.

Although the pools are sometimes marketed as maintenance free or low maintenance, this is not true. The correct water balance must be maintained, the chlorine generator must also be maintained and the pool will still need cleaning, so you will not be saying goodbye to the pool guy if you change to salt water. However, because you will no longer require lots of chemicals for your pool, costs should be reduced overtime.

To make the change to a salt water pool the

chlorine generator must be installed. There are two types of unit, one installs the chlorine producing cell and the electronics at the main equipment, and the other installs the cell in the pool deck with the electronics at the equipment. The deck unit works by convection and continues to make chlorine even when the pump is off. The first, more common unit, makes chlorine when the water passes through the cell with the circulatory system – when the pool pump is on.

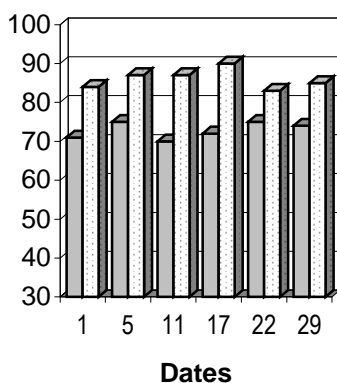
For either unit to work satisfactorily the cell must be kept clear of mineral deposits. This is mainly done by using a reverse polarity unit, which will reverse the electron flow through the cell causing the mineral deposits to flake off. Because the polarity is circular and the cell is rectangular, the ends can retain some deposits, so these must be checked and manually cleaned. The cells last between 3 and 5 years depending on usage.

There have been reports in Texas of some corrosion and deterioration to stainless steel pool parts, and even to decorative limestone. This could be down to lack of maintenance, incorrect water balance or natural deterioration of the stone, but manufacturers of the salt systems are conducting joint tests to figure out what might be causing the reported problems.

A salt generator will cost between \$1,000 and \$1,600 and once the salt (similar to the rock salt for dishwashers) is in it will need minimal topping up, as salt does not disappear by evaporation, only by being splashed out of the pool.

Our subscriber Steve Cotton of [www.poolkleenusa.com](http://www.poolkleenusa.com) on learning we were doing this article has offered a 10% discount on installation of a complete system (normal price \$1195) to subscribers. His systems feature a full 3-year warranty for parts and labour and a further 4-year limited warranty for 60% of the cost of the parts and labour.

**May Miami High/Low Temperatures**



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# Florida Homes and Travel

June 2007

## Coastal Gazette

**Miami has held** on to the dubious title of the US city with the most road rage for the second year! The convergence of two lifestyles – leisurely retirees and professional young workers – is blamed for the rage on the roads.

**State Farm Insurance Co.** will pay almost \$6.8 million to settle a class-action lawsuit by Florida policyholders who said the insurer unfairly depreciated claims for screen enclosures damaged in Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma. State Farm paid actual cash value instead of the full replacement value to about 12,000 customers. But attorneys representing the policyholders argued insurance policies did not allow State Farm to depreciate the claims. A State Farm spokesman said the misunderstanding resulted from a printing error in policies issued in Pinellas, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties. State Farm agreed to pay full replacement cost to policyholders who got the misprinted policy and the company has issued new policies in the five counties that clearly state future claims will only cover the cash value of screened enclosures.

### Dining Review - Sharkey's On The Pier

We have been visiting Venice since we first went to Florida in 1992. We love the shark's teeth and the laid back pace of life. However, amazingly, until April this year, we had never been to Sharkey's. I suppose we usually visit Venice for the day, but still, how we missed this gem is incredible. Sharkey's is located south of the Venice main street area on South Harbor Drive. The restaurant was originally just a small concession at the end of the public pier. Now it is a large restaurant with indoor, outdoor and

covered patio dining, a vibrant bar with nightly entertainment and even a roof top terrace. We knew we had hit the button when we arrived at around 6pm to a full car park. We were seated immediately, indoors so we could have the full menu. The main room is, unsurprisingly, full of shark jaws mounted on the walls and beams. There are large shell murals over the windows, I like to think they could have been collected on the beach, and huge palm shaped fans whirring lazily overhead. Tim tried **Walk the Plank;** Fresh filets of grouper, salmon and mahi baked on a cedar plank, then topped with a blue crab and mushroom sauce. He found the mahi to have a very delicate flavour, the grouper was nice and the salmon was outstanding! I had **Chicken Coastal;** grilled chicken breast topped with mushroom sauce, bacon and melted monterey jack, a very tasty version of this classic dish. Both were served with two vegetables and a choice of cheddar or red bliss mash, or rice.

### Coastal Dining Recommendations: -

(In no particular order)

1. Cortey Kitchen, Cortey, Bradenton
2. Banana Cabana – Bradenton
3. Sharkey's On the Pier – 1600 S Harbor Drive, Venice
4. Sand Bar – 100 Spring Avenue, Anna Maria Island
5. Crab and Fin – St Armands Circle, Sarasota
6. Silverspoon - Promenade, Bonita Springs
7. Pink Elephant, Boca Grande
8. Hemmingways – St Armands Circle, Sarasota
9. The Lobster Pot – 17814 Gulf Blvd, Redington Shores.
10. The Salt Water Café - 1071 Tamiami Tr, Nokomis

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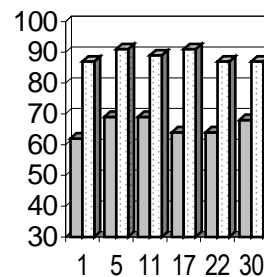
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### May Orlando High/Low Temperatures



Dates



# Florida Homes and Travel

June 2007

## After Emigration...

On this year's survey we asked you what you had in mind when you bought your property? A) A long term investment, B) a holiday home, C) a rental business generating a profit or D) a property to emigrate to in the future.

The majority of responses fell in to the first three categories as was to be expected, but 13% of you have ticked box D), and must be contemplating emigration in one form or another. We have written about EB 5 visas, other options are the E2 Treaty Investor or L1 intracompany transferee visas for business owners, of which information can be found on our website.

Many Brits over the years have gone over the pond, and the tales they can tell of their experiences at immigration could make your hair curl! But this month we thought we would look at a family that have made the leap.

Paul and Jeni Mortlock made the decision to transfer their lives to Florida in June 2004. Paul has been a General Builder in England since leaving school (more years than he cares to mention) and ran his own business for 15 years. Jeni is a hairdresser. Jeni has purchased a franchise of Fantastic Sams, one of the worlds largest hair care franchises with over 1350 franchises! Located at Clermont on South Hwy 27, Jeni has built a very steady business up catering for locals, both US and a growing number of Ex-pats! Using the franchise (identified in May 2005) to gain an E2 visa, Paul, Jeni and their 2 boys finally had the visa granted in February this year.

Before the visa was granted Paul was unable to get a licence to become a 'General Contractor'. So, not being one to sit around by the pool all

day he started marketing himself as a handyman. He began with just some cards in Jeni's shop, but is now so busy that he doesn't really have the time to do his 'General Contractor' licence!

But Paul has found this not to be necessary for the majority of his work. He can do plumbing repairs, fixing toilets, sinks and washing machines. He gets asked to install ceiling fans or other electrical upgrades, he also does lawns, painting indoors and out, pressure washing decks and paths, screen repairs – you name it, Paul can do it fulfilling his handyman title and he is fully licenced and insured.

Through connections Paul and Jeni have made out there Paul has become a sort of back up handyman for four management companies, in fact he is so trusted by one company that the owner left him in charge of the whole operation when he went on vacation!

In addition to the hair salon and the handyman work Paul and Jeni also have a rental business, hiring out full gas BBQ's, cots, highchairs and buggies to owners who temporarily need these facilities for their guests. A Gas BBQ can be delivered prior to the arrival of a guest for \$50 per week, likewise the baby products at \$25 per week. This is a useful service for owners who may worry about security of items such as BBQ's if they cannot be locked away when the house is empty.

Despite the very difficult and stressful experience of getting the visa, and the need to re-apply so soon, Paul and Jeni and their boys are overjoyed to be in Florida. They say that while many of life's worries stay the same – the joy of being able to sit by the pool in the Florida sun at the end of the day, makes it all worthwhile.

Jeni's salon Fantastic Sams, can be found at Kings Ridge Village, 4279 South Hwy 27.

Paul's P J Handy Man Services can be reached on 352 -988-3852, or [bluebayvillas@aol.com](mailto:bluebayvillas@aol.com)

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### Florida Lottery Winning Numbers

Date	Numbers
05/26/2007	04 - 07 - 12 - 30 - 41 - 46
05/23/2007	05 - 09 - 25 - 31 - 50 - 53
05/19/2007	09 - 19 - 27 - 41 - 48 - 52
05/16/2007	03 - 16 - 23 - 39 - 47 - 49
05/12/2007	14 - 18 - 19 - 24 - 37 - 46
05/09/2007	09 - 19 - 22 - 27 - 33 - 53
05/05/2007	14 - 23 - 28 - 50 - 52 - 53
05/02/2007	01 - 06 - 13 - 21 - 22 - 39

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





# Florida Homes and Travel

June 2007

## The London Symphony Orchestra and the Florida International Festival

The London Symphony Orchestra has been travelling to Daytona, its 'Official American Summer Home,' for over 40 years to take part in the Biennial Florida International Festival. This year's 16-day festival starts on July 13<sup>th</sup> and will feature over 55 performances by more than 200 different artists at various Central Florida locations. The LSO will be present for 10 of the 16 days and will perform 7 concerts, several chamber concerts and recitals and a special World Premiere of a new piece marking the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of West Side Story.

Opening the Classical series on July 20<sup>th</sup> at the Peabody Auditorium, Daytona Beach, will be Marin Alsop, hailed as the leading female conductor in the world. This will be Alsop's third appearance at the Festival and this year she will lead Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite*, *Violin Concerto* by Felix Mendelssohn and Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. Joining Alsop for Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto* is violinist Nikolaj Znaider, widely celebrated as one of the finest rising violinists today.

The Classical series continues on July 21<sup>st</sup> with Alsop conducting the LSO in *American Masters*, including work by some of the most influential American composers. Aaron Copeland's best-known work, *Appalachian Spring*, and his combination of seven folk songs into a symphony known as *El Salon Mexico* will feature along with James P Johnson's *Victory Stride* and George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. The highlight of this concert however promises to be the world premiere performance of a special arrangement of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story Symphonic Dances*, commissioned by the Deutsche Gramophon Label for Evelyn Glennie to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the premiere of *West Side Story*. Glennie is the first to maintain a full-time career as a solo percussionist with over 100 performances a year, 22 albums and performances in 42 countries (as well as Sesame Street) under her belt – and two Grammy® Awards.

Conducting the third concert and making his Festival debut is European rising star Daniel Harding who was recently appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the LSO. Harding will lead the performance of Johannes Brahms' *Double Concerto for Violin, Cello and Orchestra* and Hector Belioz' *Symphonie Fantastique*.

In all there are five Classical concerts taking place at the Peabody Auditorium, 600 Auditorium Blvd, Daytona Beach, on July 21, 22, 23, 26, and 27<sup>th</sup>. The performances start at 8pm and single tickets cost \$72, \$52, \$44 or \$30.

In keeping with tradition on July 28<sup>th</sup> the LSO will close the season with the popular LSO Pops concert entitled '*Music of Hollywood II*', Francois-Xavier Roth will lead this exciting encore performance of movie soundtracks including *Star Wars*, *The Godfather*, *Jaws*, *Rocky*, *Saving Private Ryan* and many others. This concert will be held at the Ocean Center, 101 N Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach. Single tickets cost \$52, \$40 and \$29.

On July 26<sup>th</sup> the LSO and AT&T Youth Ensembles present a fun and interactive program designed for the entire family. Francois-Xavier Roth conducts an action packed TOP SECRET concert, where children can hear themes from *The Incredibles*, *James Bond*, *Harry Potter* and *Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition*. The concert starts at 11am at the Peabody Auditorium, tickets cost \$10 for adults and \$6 for children.

Children may enjoy a James Campbell performance. Campbell is an English stand up comedian especially for children! His G-rated material encompasses everything from playstations to parents and is suitable for children 5 years and over. You can catch Campbell on July 19, 20, 21 and 22<sup>nd</sup> at various locations around Daytona. Tickets cost \$15 for adults and \$8 for children

To find out more about the many other concerts, to book tickets etc. please see [www.fif-lso.org](http://www.fif-lso.org) or phone the box office on 386-257-7790.

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# Florida Homes and Travel

June 2007

## Weird News

### Turning water into...

A Florida man has apparently succeeded in turning water into fire! We did check the date on this story before pursuing it – but former Broadcast Executive and now Sanibel resident John Kanzias was attempting to create a machine using radio waves that could help treat his cancer by eliminating cancerous cells and ignoring healthy ones. Instead (whilst investigating if he could also desalinate water) he discovered that he can fill a test tube with saltwater from the canal at the back of his house and use the radio waves of the machine and the water ignites! The flame burns at approximately 3000 degrees Fahrenheit. A chemist has said the temperature separates the hydrogen from the oxygen in the water and it is the hydrogen that is burning. Could saltwater be the energy source of the future?

### Sense of Humour Bypass?

State officials have failed to see the funny side of the Irish joke at McGuire's Irish Pubs in Destin and Pensacola where the signs for the restrooms have sent ladies to the men's room and vice versa for years. Jobsworths at the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation threatened the tourist landmark with closure for "lack of signage properly designating bathrooms". McGuire's have had to agree to install a second set of modesty doors to prevent embarrassment. The Modesty doors will be labelled correctly. I predict even more confusion and embarrassment as customers open the second door to check which door label is really right!

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### Technology too technical?

A South Florida family experienced 3 robberies over a 12-month period, so they installed state-of-the-art surveillance equipment. It wasn't long before they had something to watch – in the middle of the night thieves hopped over their 5 ft locked gates with bolt cutters, opened the gates and made off with a 32 ft cabin cruiser! When police wanted to examine the state-of-the-art security tapes, neither they nor the homeowners could work the super-sophisticated system to get a copy! Fortunately, there was a handy 15 year old near by who was able to figure it out and get a copy for the police and prevent blushes all round!

### There it goes again!

In Harleyville, S.C., the town limits sign has disappeared from the same spot for the fourth time in five years. And town officials think they know who has the signs: Harley-Davidson fans. A motorcycle shop owner says swiping Harleyville signs, which have been spotted as far away as Florida, is a point of pride among some bikers. "I've seen them coming with a beer in one hand and a sign in the other like I'd give them a brownie point or something," he said.

### Not Dirty Lies...

Gordon Zwicky's outrageous tale about his trip to Florida earned him top honours in this year's Burlington Liars Club contest (Burlington, Wis). Zwicky, 72, beat out 299 other entries from 31 states and Canada. Zwicky claimed he and his wife, Dorothy, won the lottery and decided to drive to Florida. Their neighbour told them they would be fine as long as they paid attention to the road signs. "Thirty miles from home they saw a sign stating, 'Clean Restrooms Ahead.' Two months later they arrived in Florida," the tale read. By that time, they had cleaned 450 restrooms using 267 rolls of paper towels, three cases of bowl cleaner and 86 bottles of Windex. They were so tired, they immediately left for home.

### From the Orange Peel Gazette...

A tourist was admiring the necklace worn by a local Indian.

"What is made of?" she asked.

"Alligator's teeth" the Indian replied

"I suppose," she said patronisingly, "that they mean as much to you as pearls do to us."

"Oh no," he objected. "Anybody can open an oyster."



# Florida Homes and Travel

June 2007

## Theme Park News

Shamu's Happy Harbor at SeaWorld Orlando is now re-opened and doubled in size to four fun-filled acres. Amongst the improvements are new rides: -

**Sea Carousel**, a marine-themed masterpiece topped by a behemoth 45-foot-wide pink octopus, allowing riders to board a colourful collection of 65 sea creatures, including giant exotic fish, sea lions, otters, sharks and dolphins, and then "float" up and down as the carousel revolves to the sounds of the sea.

**The Flying Fiddler**, a giant, bright-red fiddler crab with illuminated eyes that move, fills its belly with 12 children and adults and lifts them to more than 20 feet in the air. At the height of the moment, the Flying Fiddler begins jumping in a vertical descent in a quick series of short drops, sure to bring surprise and delight.

**Ocean Commotion**, a fanta-"sea"-themed enormous 19-foot tugboat, that will take 24 riders at a time on a swinging boat ride, gently rocking back-and-forth and whirling side-to-side.

Last year, three new attractions were the first of a two-part expansion. Themed after SeaWorld's famous killer whale, the **Shamu Express** thrills 28 children and parents in Shamu-themed cars down more than 800 feet of track at 28 mph.

**Jazzy Jellies** lifts and spins families in jellyfish-themed seats and **Swishy Fishies** enables adventurous youngsters to sit in oversized seats while they spin around a giant water spout.

Elsewhere in the park there is now a character breakfast offered featuring Elmo and friends from Sesame Street as well as various character meeting opportunities during the day. Elmo and friends, cutely called 'Bookaneers' feature in an action packed swashbuckling pirate adventure show on the bay lake.

**Blue Man Group** opens at Universal CityWalk on June 6. The new show will combine music, comedy and multimedia theatrics in a show which has been custom-designed for Universal Orlando and includes elements of the group's existing shows as well as newly created material exclusive to this production. Blue Man Group will perform continuously throughout the week from the 1,000-seat Sharp AQUOS Theatre. The theatre, complete with a 30-foot-tall Blue Man façade is accessible from both Universal CityWalk and Universal Studios theme park.

**Cypress Gardens** won its first Guinness World Record since reopening in 2004 with a record for the hosting the worlds largest Easter Egg Hunt. Exactly 510,000 eggs were hidden in the grounds

of the park, and it took just under an hour for them all to be found. The record will be published in the next edition of the Guinness Book of World Records due out in August 2007.

## Car Hire

We are delighted to announce that after a 3-month delay, pre-registration facilities for Budget car hire at Orlando are now fully operational.

Exactly the same as the popular service at Sanford airport, pre-registration allows us to help you avoid queuing at the desk on arrival. By supplying us with your date of birth, driving licence number and details of the credit card that you will be using for your credit card imprint on arrival, we can enter the data on your behalf on to a secure web page operated by Budget. This is simply the information that the desk clerk would ordinarily take from you on arrival before issuing your car. Because we have already done this, you can go straight out to the Budget car park to the dedicated booth where you exchange your voucher, show your licence and credit card so they can quickly check it is the same, and then you receive your keys. This saves the average half an hour wait at the desk!

The delay in operation was because Budget has had to move to a larger lot within the airport rental car locations because they are now so popular! To take advantage of this great facility, you can book online at [www.carhireflorida.net](http://www.carhireflorida.net), where you will receive details following your booking, or ring us on 01428 741438 or email us at [fhandt@btopenworld.com](mailto:fhandt@btopenworld.com) to obtain a quote or make a booking. Remember, if your rental is over 3 weeks in duration; come directly through us to make the booking to be sure to receive your £5 per week discount.

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