



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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What's new from Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods

"Ding" Darling Day at Lakes Park, Southwest Florida breweries are winners

LEE COUNTY, Fla. (U.S.A.) – Fort Myers' Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods in Southwest Florida continues to provide new experiences for returning guests and first-time visitors. Whether you're looking for great year-round weather or shell-drenched beaches along the sparkling Gulf of Mexico, VisitFortMyers.com is your source for the most up-to-date vacation information.

"Ding" Darling Day Conservation Carnival at Lakes Park

The popular "Ding" Darling Day will be a little different this year and has found a way to be convenient and accessible as the Refuge migrates its 33rd annual "Ding" Darling Day to Lakes Park in Fort Myers. Taking place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 24, the free family event will also observe Earth Day, which falls on April 22. Note: there is a parking fee at Lakes Park.

The WoW (Wildlife on Wheels) will be at the center of the event with tours of the mobile nature experience. Visitors will enjoy a full day of Conservation Carnival activities including carnival games, prizes, Earth Day crafts, artist-in-residence programs, guided bilingual birding walks, a biking tour, snow cones, and educational interactions with other local conservation organizations. Check the schedule and details at dingdarlingday.com

Plan ahead for Island Hopper 2022

Mark your calendar for Island Hopper Songwriter Fest 2022, returning for its eighth year. A 10-day music festival featuring performances by some of the country's greatest singer-songwriters, Island Hopper takes place in three areas, with the first weekend kicking off on Captiva Island, Sept. 16-18, then moving to downtown Fort Myers, Sept. 19- 22, and ending with a weekend on Fort Myers Beach, Sept. 23-25. Most shows are free, with the exception of a few ticketed experiences, like our headliner shows. Stay up-to-date on festival news with the Island Hopper app or islandhopperfest.com.

Dining/brewery news

Southwest Florida breweries win at Florida Beer Championship

When it comes to the best beer in Florida, you don't have to go any further than Southwest Florida's local breweries. At the recent Best Florida Beer Championship in Tampa, Southwest

Florida breweries, including Scotty's Bierwerks, Fort Myers Brewing Company and LaBelle Brewing Company, swept the Double IPA category. Scotty's Bierwerks also won first runner-up for Best Beer in Florida. bestfloridabeer.org

Pick an award-winning beer from the list and give it a try:

- **Scotty's Bierwerks**, Cape Coral, was named first runner-up, Best Beer in Florida and two gold awards for Double IPA, Double IPA and Blonde Ale, Summer Ale.
- **Fort Myers Brewing Company**, Fort Myers, won gold for Fort Myers Wheat, American Wheat and Chocolate Stout, Chocolate Beer. The brewery also took home silver for OYA, Double IPA.
- **Big Storm Brewing & Distilling Co.**, Cape Coral, won gold for Bromosa IPA, Experimental IPA.
- **Crazy Dingo Brewing Co.**, Fort Myers, won two silver awards for Koning Der Bouy, Belgian Tripel and Feelin' Buzzed, Honey Beer.
- **Millennial Brewing Co.**, downtown Fort Myers, won silver for Grow-Jees-K'ya, Smoked Beer.
- **Point Ybel Brewing Company**, Fort Myers, won three bronze awards for Snook Bite IPA, American IPA; Sanibel Light, German Helles Lager; and Grey Mangrove, Smoked Beer.
- **LaBelle Brewing Company**, Hendry County, won bronze for Captain Hendry, Double IPA.

Southwest Florida Ale Trail passport available

The new version of the Southwest Florida Ale Trail Passport is available and is a great way to experience craft breweries now through February 2023. Participants have fun, support local breweries in Lee, Collier, Charlotte and Hendry counties and earn rewards. swflaletrail.com

The Bohemian opens in Bonita Springs

The Bohemian has opened in the newly renovated Entrada in Bonita Springs, offering what it describes as a “relaxed, feel-good gathering environment for all.” It highlights Florida breweries in a rotating beer selection. The mindfully selected herbs and shrubs used in beverages are cultivated from an organic rooftop garden or sourced locally and each drink is handcrafted to order. Open daily and late on the weekends with dining outdoors or in. thebohemianbonita.com

Accommodations news

Shangri-La Springs reopens newly renovated hotel for reservations

Shangri-La Springs has reopened two large suites in the main hotel and six rooms in the Villa Ascona building located across from the hotel's courtyard. The historic hotel is located on 8.5 acres in the heart of downtown Bonita Springs. Built in 1921, it offers a boutique hotel experience including a full menu of spa treatments, organic farm-to-table restaurant, holistic and organic garden, event and destination wedding venue spaces. shangrilasprings.com

Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa recognized with “Best Hotels” award

Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa in Bonita Springs has received a Gold Badge in the 2022 U.S. News & World Report’s “Best Hotels” awards. The 12th annual Best Hotels rankings evaluate more than 35,000 luxury properties across 400+ destinations in the U.S., Europe, Bermuda, Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean. The methodology considers a hotel's star rating and both expert and guest sentiment by collecting annual awards from distinguished travel publications and TripAdvisor user scores, the combination of which helps determine each hotel's rank. hyattregencycoconutpoint.com

Home 2 Suites Fort Myers has received the prestigious Conrad Hilton Achievement Award 2021. The honor is an annual award given to the top 1% of hotels in the Home 2 Suites brand. It was received for having high scores in surprise quality assurance inspections from Hilton and its guest comment scores throughout the year. The hotel score ranked fourth out of 461 hotels for 2021. hilton.com

Airport news

New air service at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW)

Breeze Airways: nonstop to Las Vegas (LAS) and Charleston, South Carolina (CHS), twice weekly, beginning June 11.

Eurowings Discover: Frankfurt, Germany (FRA), weekly, year-round service

New flights at RSW

Sun Country: Duluth, Minn. (DLH), weekly; Green Bay, Wis. (GRB), weekly; Milwaukee (MKE), weekly; Rochester, Minn. (RST), weekly

United Airlines: Los Angeles (LAX), daily; San Francisco (SFO), daily

News from Punta Gorda Airport (PGD)

Allegiant service from Akron, Ohio (CAK)

Attractions news

New trailhead opens at John Yarbrough Linear Park, Fort Myers

The new trailhead at the southern end of John Yarbrough Park near Ben C. Pratt/Six Mile Cypress Parkway is now open with new amenities that include paved, ADA-compliant parking, restrooms, picnic pavilions and bike repair stations. The six-mile paved, multi-use linear park trail offers space for walking, biking, jogging, rollerblading, on-leash dog walking, fishing, birding and wildlife viewing. leegov.com/parks/parks/linearpark

Have fun and save with Fort Myers Sun Saver Passport

Fort Myers’ Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods has launched a free mobile savings passport giving users access to exclusive deals on attractions, restaurants and experiences throughout the destination.

To participate:

- Sign up at explore.visitfortmyers.com
- The passport will be delivered to your mobile phone via text.

- Redeem it on your mobile phone at participating businesses.
- Visit the website for a complete list of attractions, restaurants and experiences.

Festivals and events

Spring training

Continues through early April

Boston Red Sox

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training

Minnesota Twins

Lee County Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

www.mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training

33rd Annual “Ding” Darling Day, Lakes Park, Fort Myers

Conservation Carnival

April 24

dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/ding-darling-days

12th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival

May 18-22

fortmyersfilmfestival.com

10th Annual “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament, Sanibel Island

May 13

dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/tarpon-tournament-1

Captiva Pride Weekend

June 3-5

tween-waters.com/captiva-pride-weekend

National Seashell Day

June 20

visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day

24th Annual MangoMania Tropical Fruit Festival, Pine Island

July 16

mangomaniafl.net

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

Sept. 16-25

IslandHopperFest.com

Fort Myers Beach International Film Festival

September TBD

fmbfilmfest.com

Roar Offshore, Fort Myers Beach

October TBD

roaroffshore.com

37th Annual Oktoberfest, Cape Coral

October 21-23 and 28-30, 2022

capecoraloktoberfest.com

Lee County Alliance of the Arts 5th Annual Arts on Tap, Fort Myers

November TBD

Artinlee.org/ontap

38th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape Coral

Jan. 14-15, 2023

capecoralfestival.com

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown River District

February 2023 TBD

artfestfortmyers.com

Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

Feb. 18, 2023

edisonfestival.org

Boca Grande Film Festival

February 2023 TBD

friendsofbocagrande.org/events/boca-grande-film-festival

86th Annual Sanibel Shell Festival, Sanibel Island

March 2023

sanibelcommunityhouse.net/p/84/shell-festival

24th Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers

March 2023

readfest.org

ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers

March 2023

echonet.org/events/global-food-and-farm-festival

65th Annual Fort Myers Beach Shrimp Festival, Fort Myers Beach

March 2023

fortmyersbeach.org/events/fort-myers-beach-shrimp-festival

Editor's note: Fort Myers and surrounding areas includes Fort Myers Beach, Sanibel & Captiva islands, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, Pine Island, Matlacha, Cape Coral, North Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Alva, Buckingham and Lehigh Acres. For media assistance, VisitFortMyers.com/media-central