



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2022

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

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest Sept. 16-25 with Gary LeVox of Rascal Flatts

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. Great weather, shell-filled beaches, family fun and a chance to explore natural Florida along the Gulf of Mexico are a few of the experiences to be found in this destination. Check out VisitFortMyers.com for the most up-to-date vacation planning information.

Award-winning Island Hopper Songwriter Fest 2022 kicks off Sept. 16

The 10-day music festival featuring performances by some of the country's most talented singer-songwriters and kicks off on Captiva Island, Sept. 16-18, then moves 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. Fans will select their favorites from 70 singer-songwriters who will perform over 100 shows.

Stay up to date on festival news with the Island Hopper app or islandhopperfest.com. Also, check out Episode 70 of The Sanibel Captiva Guide Podcast for a local's take on Island Hopper at thesancapguide.com/category/podcast.

Island Hopper recently won three first-place SUNsational Awards at the recent Florida Festivals & Events Association convention in Orlando, Florida, for mobile app; virtual event (Songs from the Sand); and installations (bus wrap).

[Gary LeVox](#), frontman for Rascal Flatts is the headline songwriter/performer at the 8th Island Hopper Songwriter Fest, Sept. 16-25. LeVox is scheduled to perform at 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 25, poolside at the Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina on Fort Myers Beach.

In addition to LeVox, BMI singer-songwriters performing this year include: Kristian Bush, two-time Grammy award winner and half of the Sugarland duo; Aaron Barker, who has written songs for George Strait, Clay Walker and Willie Nelson; and Dave Pahanish, who co-wrote the No. 1 Billboard Country music singles "Do You Believe Me Now" by Jimmy Wayne, "American Ride" by Toby Keith, and "Without You" by Keith Urban.

Tickets for the LeVox concert are available on the Island Hopper app or at islandhopperfest.visitfortmyers.com/artist/gary-levox. Be sure to download the app to be entered for a chance to win a two-night stay at Pink Shell during the final weekend of Island Hopper, tickets to the LeVox concert and a \$200 gift card.

Island Hopper is produced by the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau, iHeartMedia, and BMI, the largest music rights organization in the U.S. Visit IslandHopperFest.com Follow the festival hashtag #islandhopperfest as well as the event's Twitter, Instagram and Facebook feeds.

Rockin' on the River at Caloosa Sound Amphitheater, Fort Myers

Adjacent to Luminary Hotel & Co. in downtown Fort Myers, the new riverfront Caloosa Sound Amphitheater plans Rockin' on the River, a free concert series that kicks off Sept. 13, with a performance by classic alternative rockers The FIXX. The free concert series runs September through December and includes three other well-known fan favorites: the classic pop rock sounds of Pablo Cruise (Oct. 30); country music legend Lorrie Morgan (Nov. 21); and contemporary swing revivalists Big Bad Voodoo Daddy (Dec. 15). All shows begin at 7 p.m. General admission tickets are free and may be claimed in advance at CaloosaSoundAmp.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.

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

Alaska Airlines: Seattle (SEA) weekly, year-round service.

Attractions news

Art in the Wild

Plan ahead and visit the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Oct. 29 for a day filled with free activities. Wildlife Drive is open from 7:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. with free admission. Events throughout this fun-filled day include nature photography workshops, hands-on pottery workshop, Duck Stamp exhibitions and presentation with signing by James Hautman (six-time winner) and elementary schools Conservation Cartoon Awards.

Visitors will also be treated to a "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society 40th Anniversary Celebration with cake and refreshments, a chalk pastels workshop, plein artist displays and shell crafting workshop.

Check for times and latest information at dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/art-in-the-wild

Wet walks at Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve, Fort Myers

Wet walks allow participants to see the beauty of a cypress swamp up close during September and October. The walks are led by trained guides through a trail that is usually closed to the public. The invigorating, beautiful path is immersed in the watery heart of the slough. Water

levels may reach chest high, depending on recent rainfall. The trail is safe and has welcomed tens of thousands of visitors for more than 50 years.

Wet Walks are scheduled at 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Sept. 3, 10, 14 and Oct. 1, 8, 15, 19, 22 and 29. For reservations e-mail sloughfriendswetwalks@yahoo.com. For more information, visit www.sloughpreserve.org

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.

Check in and have a good day: Fort Myers Discovery Challenge

Explore Fort Myers and surrounding areas to discover the arts and cultural attractions that make the islands, beaches and neighborhoods naturally unique. Embark on a guided tour of the Mound House that overlooks Estero Bay or walk the Calusa Heritage Trail on Pine Island. From the nationally recognized shell museum on Sanibel Island to the art galleries of Matlacha, there are so many ways to have a good day. Using your mobile device, check in to each location and you could find exclusive savings and deals. Even better, you can earn a variety of prizes.

visitfortmyers.com/challenge

In the news

Take Grandma to Sanibel Island

Southern Living magazine says if you're planning to take Grandma on a special trip this year, Sanibel Island is on its list of the best places to go.

“Unwind and unplug on this remote island that's devoid of stoplights, high-rises, and big-chain grocery stores, but offers plenty of sandy shoreline, shaded bike paths, great restaurants. If Gran's the type who keeps a bowl of seashells from family vacations past, take her to the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, a world-renowned showcase and research center dedicated to seashells and mollusks. Then, head to Periwinkle Way to find the perfect souvenir to remember your trip by at a local shop.” <https://www.southernliving.com/travel/trips-to-take-with-grandma>

Annual festivals and events

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

Sept. 16-25

IslandHopperFest.com

Roar Offshore, Fort Myers Beach

Oct. 6-8

roaroffshore.com

Art in the Wild Day, J.N. “Ding” Darling Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island

Oct. 29

dingartinthewild.com

37th Annual Oktoberfest, Cape Coral

Oct. 21-23 and 28-30

capecoraloktoberfest.com

Alliance for the Arts 5th Annual Arts on Tap, Fort Myers

Nov. 12

Artinlee.org/ontap

Holiday events

Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre, Fort Myers

Irving Berlin’s “White Christmas” in the Main Theatre Nov. 18 --Dec. 30;

Ha! Ha! Ho! The Holiday Show in Off Broadway Palm Dec. 10-25;

“Santa Claus the Musical” in the Children’s Theatre Nov. 29-Dec. 24.

broadwaypalm.com

47th Annual Holiday Nights at Edison and Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers

Nov. 25- Jan. 1

“Holidays on the Riverfront.”

EdisonFord.org

38th annual Luminary Holiday Stroll

Sanibel Island Dec. 2 and Captiva Island Dec. 3.

sanibel-captiva.org

Fort Myers Beach 34th annual Christmas Boat Parade

Dec. 3 beginning at 6 p.m. at Salty Sam’s Marina and will pass the restaurants on the back bay.

fortmyersbeach.org/events/2022-christmas-boat-parade

Southwest Florida Symphony

Holiday Pops

Dec. 12 at the Village Church at Shell Point

Dec. 13 at First Presbyterian Church of Bonita Springs

Guest artist: Andrew Lipke

swflso.org/concerts

Annual Port Boca Grande Lighthouse and Museum Lighting, Boca Grande

Dec. 11

barrierislandparkssociety.org

Holiday Boat-A-Long, Cape Coral

Dec. 17

Freedoms Park

facebook.com/capecoralspecialevents

Adventures in Paradise Holiday Cruises, Port Sanibel Marina, Fort Myers

Dec. 24 Santa Dolphin and Wildlife Cruise and a Christmas Eve sunset cruise.

adventureinparadiseinc.com/cruises/santa-christmas-cruise

2023 Events

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

Jan. 14-15

capecoralfestival.com

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown River District

Feb. 3-5

artfestfortmyers.com

Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

Feb. 18

edisonfestival.org

Spring training 2023

Boston Red Sox

February-March

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training

Minnesota Twins

February-March

Lee County Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training

Boca Grande Film Festival

February TBD

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

86th Annual Sanibel Shell Show and Festival, Sanibel Island

March 2-4

sanibelcommunityhouse.net/p/84/shell-festival

24th Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers

March 4

readfest.org

ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers

March 7-11

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

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

March 11-12

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

34th Annual “Ding” Darling Day, Lakes Park, Fort Myers

Conservation Carnival

April 22

dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/ding-darling-days

17th Annual Fort Myers Beach International Film Festival

April TBD

fmbfilmfest.com

World’s Richest Tarpon Tournament and Ladies Day Tarpon Tournament

May TBD

bocagrandechamber.com/tarpon-tournaments

13th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival

May 17-21

fortmyersfilmfestival.com

11th Annual “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament, Sanibel Island

May 19

dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/tarpon-tournament-1

Captiva Pride Weekend

June 2-4

tween-waters.com/captiva-pride-weekend

National Seashell Day

June 21

visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day

MangoMania Tropical Fruit Festival, Pine Island

July TBD

mangomaniafl.net

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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