



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2023

CONTACTS: Ray Sarracino, Jackie Parker, Miriam Dotson 239-338-3500

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

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest returns, celebrate National Seashell Day

LEE COUNTY, Florida (U.S.A.) – This summer brings reopenings of accommodations and attractions. National Seashell Day on June 21 is also the first day of summer as we celebrate a new season along with the 400 species of shells that wash up on our beaches. And dates and locations for Island Hopper Songwriter Fest have been confirmed so make plans now!

For details about the accommodations and attractions that are currently open, go to visitfortmyers.com/open. As beaches continue to open, find the latest information at visitfortmyers.com/beach-conditions

Save the date: Island Hopper Songwriter Fest returns

Make plans now to be part of Island Hopper, Sept. 22-Oct. 1. In its 9th year, the 10-day, award-winning festival brings Nashville songwriters to Southwest Florida's tropical paradise to perform in intimate settings. This gives fans the opportunity to interact with the musicians, up close and personal.

New this year – Island Hopper welcomes the city of **Cape Coral** to the lineup. The four locations and dates include: Captiva Island, Sept. 22-24; Cape Coral, Sept. 25-26; downtown Fort Myers, Sept. 27-28; and Fort Myers Beach, Sept. 29-Oct. 1.

While most shows are free, new this year to Island Hopper will be more ways to enjoy unique, ticketed live performances, including:

- Island Hopping cruises
- Songwriter brunches
- Chef's dinner and wine pairings
- Music on the Mound at Mound House on Fort Myers Beach

Plus, much more, including the house parties on Captiva Island. Be sure to use the Island Hopper Songwriter Fest app – it's your ticket to what's happening and when.

Among the acts scheduled to perform are:

- [Clint Daniels](#) – With songs that have helped shape country music for almost 20 years, his work has been performed by George Strait, Alan Jackson, Brooks & Dunn, Clay Walker, Brandy Clark and other country acts.
- [Clare Cunningham](#) – The Irish singer-songwriter made her Grand Ole Opry debut in March and performed “Galway Girl” on stage with Steve Earle.
- [Essex County](#) – British brothers Nate, Mark and Kiernan Bass return with their tight, family harmonies and sweeping country and rock influences.
- [Coretta King](#) – With music that speaks to your soul, King strives for her music not to solely “reflect the times,” as Nina Simone once said, but to transcend it.
- [Frank Myers](#) – Multi-award-winning artist wrote the No. 1 hit “You and I” for Eddie Rabbitt and Crystal Gayle and co-wrote the No. 1 hit “I Swear” for John Michael Montgomery.

For the full lineup and ticket information, visit islandhopperfest.com or download the app. Island Hopper Songwriter Fest is presented by BMI, Fort Myers – Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods, and iHeart Radio.

National Seashell Day, June 21

Our visitors know the joy of searching through seashells to find that perfect lightning whelk or alphabet cone. These natural treasures have inspired us to dedicate June 21 to celebrate the first day of summer as well as the seashells that wash onto our shores every day of the year. With more than 50 miles of beaches and over 400 species of seashells that often cover the white sands, there’s no other place quite like Fort Myers for shell hunting. People come from all over the world to search for unbroken seashells on our shores. In fact, Sanibel Island is known as the “Seashell Capital of the World” because of its unique east-west orientation that brings countless seashells in pristine condition to its white-sand beaches. visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day

Accommodations news

Gullwing Beach Resort, Fort Myers Beach, will reopen to all guests starting June 30. gullwingfl.com

Hampton Inn & Suites Fort Myers Beach/Sanibel Gateway is accepting reservations for guests starting June 13. hilton.com/en/hotels/fmyhshx-hampton-suites-fort-myers-beach-sanibel-gateway

Lovers Key Resort, Fort Myers Beach, is accepting reservations for arrivals in August. loverskey.com

Pickleball is open at Sundial Beach Resort & Spa, Sanibel Island

Josh Jeffcott, director of Sundial’s racquet sports program reports that the resort’s 12 pickleball courts are currently open as the resort continues rebuilding and working toward a 2024 reopening. The popular courts are available from 8 a.m.-2 p.m., \$20/day drop-in fee, with open

play from 9-11 a.m. For a membership or day pass for nonmembers, contact josh.jeffcott@sundialresorts.com or call 239-395-6037. sundialresort.com

Crown Plaza to become Doubletree by Hilton, Fort Myers

The Crowne Plaza Fort Myers at Bell Tower Shops in south Fort Myers will shift brands to the Hilton portfolio by the end of 2023. The property's conversion to a DoubleTree by Hilton will consist of major renovations to the lobby, meeting rooms and its Shoeless Joe's Sports Cafe. The hotel's 225 guest rooms recently underwent extensive renovations.

ihg.com/crowneplaza/hotels/us/en/fort-myers/fmyso/hoteldetail

Dining, coffee and brewery news

The Shipyard has opened at **'Tween Waters Island Resort & Spa on Captiva Island.**

The nautically themed restaurant pays tribute to the bygone days of Florida's fishing and boating legacy. shipyardcaptiva.com

After having to vacate its previous location, popular **Peters German Ice Cream and Coffee Shop** in **downtown Fort Myers** has reopened in its new space on Dean Street.

peters-icecream.com

Liki Tiki BBQ has reopened in its new Fort Myers Beach location on San Carlos Boulevard. likitikibbq.com

Fort Myers Brewing Company has earned international acclaim with a silver medal at the 2023 World Beer Cup, a global beer competition that evaluates beers from around the world and recognizes the most outstanding brewers and their beers. The brewery was awarded silver in the Chocolate Beer category for its popular Chocolate Stout, an imperial stout that's chock-full of sweetness and decadent layers of rich chocolate seamlessly melding with subtle wisps of roasted barley and espresso. FMBrew.com

Airport news

Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) was named No. 1 of the 10 best airports in the U.S. by Travel Lens, an online travel publication. Fifty of the busiest U.S. airports were ranked by wait time, passenger satisfaction and Google review ratings. flylcpa.com

New air service at RSW:

Breeze Airways: Harford (BDL), weekly, started May 17; Providence (PVD), weekly, starting July 2.

JetBlue Airways: Worcester (ORH), weekly starting Jan. 4, 2024.

Attractions and entertainment

The Francis P. Bailey Jr. Sanibel and Captiva Islands Chamber visitor center and offices have reopened following months of renovation. sanibel-captiva.org

Captivaville Songwriters Weekend takes place at 'Tween Waters Island Resort & Spa, Captiva Island, June 16-18 with live music from local songwriters and performers. Check the schedule at tween-waters.com/captivaville

The Mound House on Fort Myers Beach is open and in addition to touring the museum, visitors may also book kayak and shell mound tours. moundhouse.org

The Burroughs Home & Gardens in downtown Fort Myers, is again offering docent-led tours of the historic, 1901 Georgian Revival mansion in downtown Fort Myers. Self-guided tours are also available. burroughshome.com

The Captiva Historical Society has reopened the History Gallery in the Captiva Memorial Library. captivaislandhistoricalsociety.org

Check out our webcams

It's the next best thing to being here. Take a peek at some of your favorite locations at visitfortmyers.com/webcams

Shellcrafters at Sanibel Community House

The Shellcrafters return to the Community House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., beginning June 19. The free shell crafting classes (participants purchase supplies from \$5 to \$10) will continue each Monday through September and from 10 a.m. through 3 p.m. October through April 2024. For details visit

sanibelcommunityhouse.net/event/shell-crafters-2/2023-06-19

Sun Saver Passport: Dine, Play, Shop, Sip

This popular, digital savings pass provides instant access to a variety of deals and experiences from area attractions, restaurants and more across four categories – Dine, Play, Shop and Sip. Sign-up is simple and free. Passports are instantly delivered to phones via text and email. And there is an option for users to save the pass on their home screen for one-tap access. Sign up now to start saving. visitfortmyers.com/sun-saver-passport

Cape Coral Quest: win prizes and explore

Download the Cape Coral Quest app for a fun way to explore the area and a chance to win prizes through Nov. 30. Follow the directions at visitfortmyers.com/cape-coral-quest to collect a Cape Coral Quest Pass to participate on any mobile device.

Annual festivals and events

Captiva Pride Weekend

June 2-4

tween-waters.com/captiva-pride-weekend

National Seashell Day

June 21

visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day

Mango Mania

July 15

Our Lady of Miraculous Medal-Catholic Church, Bokeelia

pineislandchamber.org/chamber-events/mangomania

J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge “Art in the Wild”

Oct. 21-22

dingartinthewild.com

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

Sept. 22-Oct. 1

island-hopperfest.visitfortmyers.com

Cape Coral Oktoberfest

Oct. 20-22 and 27-29

capecoraloktoberfest.com

Sanibel Island Writers Conference

November TBD

fgcu.edu/siwc

39th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape Coral

Jan. 13-14, 2024

capecoralfestival.com

ArtFest Fort Myers, Downtown River District

Feb. 2-4, 2024

artfestfortmyers.com

21st annual Burrowing Owl Festival, Cape Coral

February TBD

Rotary Park

cfriendsofwildlife.org/burrowing-owl-festival-2

Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

February TBD

edisonfestival.org

Spring training 2024, February and March

Boston Red Sox

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training

Minnesota Twins

Lee County Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training

25th Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers

March 2, 2024

readfest.org

ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers

March TBD

echonet.org/events/global-food-and-towardwardl

35th Annual “Ding” Darling Day

April TBD

dingdarlingsocietv.org/articles/ding-darling-days

14th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival

May TBD

fortmyersfilmfestival.com

12th Annual “Ding” Darling and Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament

May TBD

dingdarlingsocietv.org/articles/tarpon-tournament-1

-30-

***EDITOR’S NOTE:** Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods include: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Matlacha, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, North Fort Myers, Alva, Buckingham and Lehigh Acres. For more information, go to visitfortmyers.com.*