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ART BASEL-MANIA!
BARBARIANS AT THE BEACH
CHECKING IN: HOTELS, SPAS, RESTAURANTS
TRUMP: PAR FOR THE COURSE
LIFE AFTER LEBRON
BONEFISHING
BOATS TO CHARTER
AND MORE....

MiAMI
America's City of the Future
The city's hotel landscape is shifting. For the past two decades, Miami's most significant hotels have been those located on the beach's main Art Deco drag: Collins Avenue running north from roughly 15th to 20th streets, and Ocean Drive flowing south below that. That's all changing—South Beach has grown up and moved north. The reopening of the Fontainebleau in 2008 paved the way for the Soho Beach House on 44th Street, which, with the help of no less than five forthcoming, game-changing hotels in the neighborhood, is helping to create Mid Beach. Meanwhile, the St. Regis Bal Harbour, which opened on 96th Street two years ago, has become a juggernaut, and the city's financial district, on the mainland below South Beach, has come into its own.

Now there are hotels that matter everywhere. We started with a list of 75 properties, and then we sent our editors to visit each one. From there we picked the 25 we think are doing it right—hotels with great personality and outstanding staff who are bringing the buildings to life. — J.F.

St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort
ABUNDING IN EXTRAVAGANCE

The hotel, which opened in 2012, is one of those properties that, other than the guest rooms' somewhat nonintuitive computer-panel light switches, is more or less flawless. Standard rooms are like mini apartments at 650 square feet, and every room has at least a 210-square-foot terrace with an ocean view. In other words, there isn't a bad room. Even on busy days, the hotel never feels too crowded. The lobby is an oasis of calm; there's always an open pool or a beach chair. Plus, the staff serves guests to the max. The only disappointment is checking out.  Room rates start at $735; 9703 Collins Ave.; 305-992-3300; stregisbalharbour.com.
W South Beach
BREATHTAKING TRENDS
The hotel opened in 2009 just north of the Collins Avenue main drag. It's one of the area's only new builds; thus all rooms face the beach, and even standard ones are South Beach large at 550 square feet, as there were no Art Deco preservation constraints. Suites on the 19th and 20th penthouse floors are the ones to book. Room decor screams Miami, with giant Danny Clinch rock photos ranging from Missy Elliott to Elvis Costello. Some would say the balconies (all rooms have them) offer good beach views; others would say they look down at the parking lot. Easy access to Mr. Chow and club Wall are an advantage. But be careful what you use is your room. Everything seems to have a price tag on it.
Rooms start at $399, 2201 Collins Ave; 305-639-3000; wsouthbeach.com.

SLS Hotel South Beach
PARTY CENTRAL
Bass-thumping nightlife and dining define the two-year-old hotel, where the Lenny Kravitz-designed penthouse and villa are stunners. Standard rooms are small—impossible to do a push-up in—but that’s okay: You’re only staying here if you want a place where your teenage kids can go crazy.
Rooms start at $315, 1761 Collins Ave; 305-676-1777; slssouthbeach.com.

Hotel Beaux
Arts Miami
THE WIRED SOPHISTICATE
The private, 44-room downtown hotel within-a-hotel is on the 28th, 38th and 46th floors of the JW Marriott Marquis. It's comfortable—like a slick man cave. It bills itself as a tech hotel, yet it has some wired quirks. It's hard to figure out how to turn on the Bang & Olufsen TV—and there are no iPhone docks.
Rooms start at $330, 255 Biscayne Blvd, Miami; 305-421-9200; hotelbeauxartsmiami.com.

Shelborne Wyndham Grand South Beach
REBORN AGAIN
The hotel shuttered in July 2013 to undergo a $280 million gut overhaul (which was incomplete at press time but should be finished any day now). A hard-hat tour proved promising: The new design is quite retro-cool. The owners are also banking on the refresh to class up the vibes; the previous incarnation was all party, party, party. Rooms start at $299, 1015 Collins Ave; 305-531-1271; shelborne.com.

THIS IS MY MIAMI

DHYANE WADE, Miami Heat
“I love to get a massage, so I stay at the Mandarin hotel and paint my toenails black. I go into the spa and turn myself off from the world.

It’s like seeing an eclipse when you see Miami at night. I’ve lived in Miami for more than a decade, and I used to go out, but I don’t anymore.

Right now I’m sitting here with paint on my legs, my face, my arms. I just did my painting something for Art Basel with Silly Kid, the street artist. It was basketball-themed.

One of the best things about living here is the water. It’s what makes Miami special. You cannot live here and not be on the water. I go boating up the bay—I’m building a house on the water and I love to check in on the progress—and through the downtown Brickell area. You can take a boat right to the restaurants Zum or Seaside and Pepper. If it’s a beach day, I like hanging out at the W or St. Regis hotels.

Miami sports fans have changed in the years that the Heat fan base has really grown a lot. When I first came here, sports fans were very Dolphins-happy. But the Heat organization has done really well, and we own the hot sports space now.

For shops, I love Del Toro Shoes. I’m very close friends with Matt, the founder. I created my own shoes with red, black, white, pony hair and leather. I also have a line of Hablot watches—I’m designing my second watch, which is coming out later this year. I like to go into the Hablot Boutique at Hablot Shops to see how my watches are doing.

I don’t get a chance to go out much. I eat at home a lot. When I do eat out, I’m in the Midtown area, which has more of the trendy shops and restaurants. I like Jenny’s, which is a great Italian spot, or Prime and Joy, which is a barbecue. Prime 112, in South Beach, has great people-watching.”

The Ritz Carlton, South Beach
UNBUTTONED ELEGANCE
There are no surprises here: In the heart of the Collins Avenue hotel hubbub, the property, which underwent a $12 million guest-room redesign in 2012, is an expected retreat that exudes beach sophistication without being stuffy. Book one of the two one-bedroom South Beach Suites, which are on the corner and have a wraparound balcony and access to the tenth-floor Ocean Club level. The hotel stands out for its staff’s attentiveness—but that’s really just standard Ritz-Carlton fare, as is the property in general.
Rooms start at $440; 1 Lincoln Rd, 786-276-4000; ritzcarlton.com.

The James Royal Palm
LOW-KEY GETAWAY
Locals say the two-year-old South Beach property is a hidden gem. The hotel clearly trice hard. Rooms have youthful personality, with driftwood headboards, white linens and funky accent pieces (though white-tiled floors feel a bit sterile). Grounds are pretty and green. The main pool is large, like rentals are complimentary and it’s one of the area’s most dog-friendly hotels. Meanwhile, guests aren’t the type who are looking for a scene. One should be careful when booking a room however—it’s easy to end up with an unattractive alley view. Opt only for a King Guestroom to guarantee an oceanfront vista. That said, no mater what room one ends up in, the vibe, with fluffy duvets, are exceptionally inviting. Rooms start at $280; 1645 Collins Ave; 305-594-5700; jameshotels.com.