

## **Hotels Magazine**

**Why base a swanky boutique hotel around a theme of philanthropy?** “We simply believe in it,” says Plutzik, a former vice chairman for Credit Suisse who quit Wall Street in 2002 so he could spend more time on charity work. He and some friends bought the 63-key former Betsy Ross Hotel last year and renovated it into an upscale South Beach hotspot. “When we started doing the hotel, we felt strongly—both as a business and a personal matter—that the hotel establish itself as a philanthropic charitable force.” The Betsy’s popularity provides Plutzik with a bully pulpit of sorts to engage the public at large in his charitable efforts, but more importantly, the hotel’s physical space is a gathering place for community leaders to meet and engage others in dialogue about their many worthy causes. Plutzik regularly holds salons in The Betsy’s bar with thought leaders from the arts world. “It’s not just giving money, and it’s not just having an event,” says Plutzik, 55. “It’s about being a catalyst for philanthropic things.” Philanthropy seems to run in the family.

## **Green Lodging News**

**The Betsy Appoints Vice President for Philanthropy ...** For almost 70 years a unique Florida Georgian façade has distinguished The Betsy hotel from its Art Deco neighbors in South Beach ... Now there is a movement afoot from behind the signature white shuttered windows overlooking Ocean Drive that is attracting extra notice. After a 2-year restoration, and through a range of strategic partnerships, the hotel has become a catalyst for energized discourse, innovative thinking, and good works. In this effort, the property has named Deborah Briggs as vice president for philanthropy to provide strategic and operational leadership for The Betsy’s community-conscious efforts that will, in the words of Jonathan Plutzik, chairman and principal partner, “build our business and make the world a better place.” The hotel’s philanthropic interests include education, medical research, nonprofit sustainability, the arts, culture, and African relief—arenas that have been supported for years by the PG Family Foundation.

## **The Informed Traveler**

**The John Lennon Tour Bus at Sleepless Night ...** Just another reason we love the pretty Betsy Hotel in South Beach ... community-conscious efforts and philanthropic interests covering education, medical research, nonprofit sustainability, the arts, culture, and African Relief. One of the first projects: **The John Lennon Educational Tour Bus At Sleepless Night-Miami.** Parked on the beach in front of The Betsy from Saturday, November 7th to Wednesday, November 11th, this recording studio on wheels honors soldiers and their families. In the days prior to Sleepless Night, The Lennon Bus will visit schools, community centers, and private organizations to collect and archive creative materials for the project. Guests of all ages are encouraged to visit the Bus and bring images, letters, songs, and stories to record memories and archive personal photos using multi-media recording equipment.

## **OVATIONS**

**Literary Digs in South Beach ...** the Betsy Hotel aims to be a true public house, where locals mingle with guests for conversation, celebration, and cultural exchange. This philosophy shows in the art that lines the interior walls. Currently on exhibit are photographs by renowned photographers Bobby Sager, Richard Bluestein, and a collection of prints from the Rockarchive. Large and luminous, the photos reflect the commitment the Betsy has with arts and literature. The Betsy welcomes non-guests to stroll through the hotel’s public areas to view the photographs... Betsy (is) ... a place where ideas prosper with practice, life embraces art, and hospitality extends beyond the check-out date ... philanthropic plans for the Betsy ... include the creation of a writer’s room ... and a writer in residence program to birth literary projects.

## BLACK GIVES BACK

***South Beach Hotel Answers President Obama's Call to Service ...*** I love reading about for profit and non-profit partnerships and this one is a first for me - a philanthropic hotel!

## MIAMI MODERN LUXURY

**From the time it started accepting guests, the Betsy began hosting community functions,** book readings, town hall meetings, fundraisers, and receptions ... Oral histories, human rights, and charities helping African causes aren't thing you normally associate with South Beach hotels, and that's exactly the point. 'We are committed to both inner and outer beauty', says Jonathan Plutzik, Chairman and Principal Partner.

## THE MIAMI HERALD

**The Betsy opened last spring with a promise to deliver something different** from South Beach's greatest export, excess with an ocean view. In a place that values bronzed bodies, parties and designer cocktails, the hotel was cast by its owners as an intellectual space far more suited to thinking and creativity. Today, the boutique hotel at 1440 Ocean Dr. with its distinct Colonial bones, four-column portico and sweeping front porch, offers ambitious programming that embraces the notion of public places as cultural parlors where thoughtful South Floridians and travelers can gather to engage in social discourse ranging from poverty to philanthropy, from the power of the arts to the healing of Haiti. "We really believe that conversations matter, and we wanted a space in which like-minded people could meet, interact and work toward something good," says owner Jonathan Plutzik, 55, who retired from the investment-banking world in 2003. "We wanted to establish this hotel as a philanthropic charitable force." So far, with several cultural partners, The Betsy has hosted art salons and community workshops. It helped lead an oral-history project to capture the stories of World War II soldiers, screened documentaries, even appointed a vice president of philanthropy, whose primary mission is to make the place a conduit for good causes.

## EXAMINER.COM

**Summers in South Florida can be fairly desolate for the arts but every so often one finds hidden gems.** On Sunday, June 27, the University of Wynwood and the Betsy Hotel on South Beach are sponsoring a poetry reading featuring Gregory Pardlo and Ed Skoog in the hotel's tony B Bar. The reading will begin at 6:30 PM and will be followed by a brief Q&A session conducted by University of Wynwood Director P. Scott Cunningham. If you haven't been on the hallowed grounds of the University of Wynwood, it's likely because the University doesn't have a physical location. Instead, it sponsors local events like poetry readings, workshops, and panels all with an eye toward encouraging poetry in South Florida. You can find more information about the University of Wynwood on their website where you can also read about the Betsy Hotel's uniquely poetic lineage.

## Biscayne Times

**To paraphrase Mark Strand, the fourth U.S. Poet Laureate (1990-1991): "There is no happiness like mine [when] I have been eating poetry."** While we savored carnivorous delights brought down from the lobby's signature restaurant, BLT Steak, we poetry diners fielded "verse trivia" questions and watched a presentation of "Florida" poems... The mission behind The Betsy's beautiful façade is to harbor cultural life. To that end, they've succeeded admirably. The Plutzik clan -- which includes Jonathan's wife and Betsy co-owner Lesley Goldwasser -- have been at the helm of the Academy Award-winning *Music by Prudence* documentary tour, as well as the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus. Less flashy projects included the fundraiser they hosted for Doctors without Borders (my husband's favorite charity) after the Haiti earthquake, and the poetry bookmarks, embedded with wildflower seeds, that are placed in every guest room (along with recently released publications from Books & Books).