

# 3 Score & More

Travel, Style and Discovery at 60+

## Ready, Set, Go: The Betsy in South Beach



*Guest blogger Paula Forman shares her favorite winter pick-me-up, Miami's South Beach, and the destination hotel for body and soul. There is a lot of winter left but, really, who couldn't use this any time of year?*

It's always a matter of taste, but I adore Miami and especially [THE BETSY](#) in South Beach.

South Beach is everything you have probably heard about it: Historic Art Deco architecture, multi-cultural, crowded and noisy. It is *not* for tennis or golf or those looking for an all-in, away from it all, exclusive resort vacation. It is, however, my idea of an American Dream holiday, with people of every race, age, and nationality enjoying sun and surf with great enthusiasm.

There were couples, both straight and gay, singles of all ages, and families of every configuration. I am not, by nature, a happy even tempered woman, but I just spent 5 consecutive days feeling just about as content as I get.

Miami is a 2 ½ hour flight from NYC, and [THE BETSY](#) is about a 20-minute cab ride from the airport. It's half a day from New York door-to-door; doesn't get easier than that.

South Beach runs a little more than ten blocks along the Atlantic, with small hotels that abut one another and face the ocean. There are quieter, and in some cases less expensive hotels a block inland on Collins Avenue and along the parallel Washington Avenue, but I like Ocean Drive and all the action that comes with it.



THE BETSY is at one end of the South Beach strip, along Ocean Drive. It is more upscale than most of the other hotels and is set a bit back from the street which creates some protection from the street traffic without losing the spirit of the place. It is a blend of Georgian and contemporary style and has just been named by *Condé Nast Traveler* as one of their favorite hotels in the world. Well deserved, in my opinion.



The rooms are not huge but very well appointed. The staff is, in all regards, outstanding. Aware, but not intrusive.

The Betsy has a literary conceit- which means there are books- real books that you want to read- in every room. And a library! Our room had Harold Robbins (*The Betsy*, which I consumed in 2 days, Pat Barker's *Toby's World* and *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin among others...)



There are two rooftop decks, one with a pool, and a staked out area of the beach. All the beaches are public and can get quite crowded but The Betsy provides beach loungers and umbrellas and beach boys who will set you up and fetch whatever you desire.





Our days were divided between the serenity of the roof deck and the beach which is deep and well groomed with the best, most diverse people watching I've enjoyed in some time. There is also an excellent restaurant right in the hotel and one could do worse than to have most meals there- we did.



As the sun goes down the activity on Ocean Drive dials up. There are literally dozens of restaurants, nearly all with sidewalk dining as well as quieter indoor space. There are hawkers on the street inviting you in, and taking reservations. It has a carnival feel but not even slightly threatening. People are dressed in everything from shorts to sequins and it doesn't seem to matter. There is music billowing out on the street and some places serve their cocktails in glasses as large as soup bowls. Everyone is having a great time, or so it seems.

One night we had dinner at Gianni's in the *Versace Mansion*. The food was just plain awful but the room was fantastic. It has an interior courtyard with a pool and the other diners delighted in posing for selfies – it was fun to watch and, as is the case nearly everywhere in South Beach, the easy going vacay vibe was contagious.

South Beach is about the least self-conscious holiday destination I can imagine and *The Betsy* one of the most relaxing. Truly, anything goes and I am booking another 5 days right now!

One more thought. My husband and I were there through the Christmas holidays without children, grandchildren, and other usual suspects. Should you find yourself alone for this or that holiday and have no time for a pity party, check out *The Betsy* in South Beach. You won't be sorry.

Don't forget the 50 sunblock! And a hat!