

OPEN SKIES



MARCH
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PRICE: FROM US\$239 PER NIGHT

In a touristy Miami neighbourhood, an independent hotel champions the city's literary side

A storied past

WORDS: DIANA SPECHLER



Miami was a town arguably not known as an intellectual heavyweight, until Art Basel came in and changed everything. Nearly two decades later and the city is awash with creative endeavours that span free opera, independent bookstores and centres for performing arts.

As artists and writers flock to the city, independent boutique hotels are fulfilling their wishes for a more unique stay.

A good choice is The Betsy-South Beach, whose independent ownership and private libraries may prove ripe for creative inspiration. Recently doubled in size owing to a 2016 purchase of a neighbouring hotel, the property boasts both courtyard and rooftop pools – the latter strung with lights and accompanied by deck-side views of the city.

In addition to a grand library furnished with velvet armchairs and vintage typewriters, each guest room features a private library. The literary leanings extend beyond the aesthetic: a fixture among the city's independent bookstores and festivals, The Betsy

hosts readings, salons, and writing classes. Rooms provide studied interiors with washed-oak furniture, Sferra linens and Malin + Goetz bath products. As well as a skyline penthouse with a wrap-around terrace, another stand-out suite is a cozy "Writer's Room", which has been gifted to hundreds of authors, including US Poet Laureates, for week-long writing retreats. In exchange, the writers give public readings and teach on-site classes for hotel guests and the local community.

Elsewhere, more thoughtful touches speak to the hotel's theme. A simple white metal bridge running along one side of the property is carved with lines of poetry, paying homage to Miami writers such as Harlem Renaissance icon, Langston Hughes. Other on-site literary flourishes include a monthly play-reading club, free and open to the public, and an elevator decorated with book-cover art. Plus, the hotel is dog-friendly – and what's better than getting lost in a good novel while the dog sleeps at your feet?

IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Chow down in South Beach

Award-winning French chef and restaurateur Laurent Tourondel has two delicious on-site restaurants, LT Steak & Seafood and The Alley, but foodies in search of Latin fare (when in Miami...) should venture off property so as not to miss the innovative gastronomy and culinary theatre at José Andrés' The Bazaar, or Fuego Y Mar at the brand-new Ritz-Carlton South Beach.

Beyond the literary arts

The hotel hosts nightly live jazz, as well as frequent chamber music performances, and spotlights local and emerging photographers and other artists. The city of Miami turns into a visual-art haven every December, hosting a number of art fairs, including the famous Art Basel, and The Betsy joins in – utilising its own gallery spaces as well as nearby galleries to exhibit the works of international artists.



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