

OFF THE ISLAND

THERE IS A SAYING YOU HEAR SOMETIMES WHETHER YOU'RE WINDOW SHOPPING ON WORTH AVENUE OR EATING SQUID INK ORRECHIETTE AT BŪCCAN THAT INSISTS "IF YOU WANT TO SPEND YOUR LIFE ON AN ISLAND, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DO IT: *LIVE IN NEW YORK, DIE IN PALM BEACH.*" AND PERHAPS THERE IS SOME TRUTH TO IT.

BY NICO CASSANETTI

EVER SINCE HENRY Flagler turned the 16-mile long barrier island into his own Shangri-La, Palm Beach has been lauded as one of the chicest tropical destinations in the country. Since its incorporation, the town has been home to dozens of affluent families, most notably the Kennedy family's "winter White House," purchased by JFK Sr. in 1933, as well as many famous artists, musicians, and celebrities. From fashion icon Lily Pulitzer to International best-selling author James Patterson, even John Lennon became a bona fide Palm Beacher after buying Harold Vanderbilt's former home in 1980.

There is no shortage of travel guides or magazine itineraries of what to eat, see, and do in Palm Beach, all offering laundry lists that highlight everything from the most luxurious to the deepest hidden gems. However, what so many of these travelogues overlook is the wonderful world that exists off the island.

Palm Beach: Off The Island is a new series in Life|Style's Palm Beach dossier – featuring a new "best of" list in each issue that reveals some of the best-kept secrets of Palm Beach County. As someone who has spent over a decade on both islands, I can safely say that although Palm Beach is not New York, there's still a lot of living to do.

Part 1: Downtown West Palm Beach

Just across the Intracoastal Waterway, away from the opulent waterfront mansions and the manicured laws of Palm Beach, is the newly redesigned *West Palm Beach Waterfront & City Commons*. It is not ostentatious or wildly picturesque, yet the difference between its daytime festivities and nightlife alter ego is quite remarkable. The Waterfront hosts an array of events including cultural and food festivals, Clematis by Night, boat and car shows, and outdoor concerts at the new amphitheater.





Each year from October to May there is also a weekly *Green Market* on Saturdays, where you can stock up on farm fresh produce and dry or baked goods. With over 70 vendors, you can buy anything from handmade soap to imported French cheeses (don't for to check out the tunnel of tents filled with flowering orchids, bromeliads and air plants) while sipping on \$10 bottomless mimosas. Additionally, this summer will premiere a new program called *Summer in Paradise*, an Arts and Entertainment series that will run all summer long. One of the first events of the "Summer in Paradise" series is the temporary art installation initiative called *The Pool*. To kick off the inaugural event, *The Pool* will feature the acclaimed light sculptor Jen Lewin, who will erect a colorful interactive light installation on the Waterfront that will be open to the public June 4th-July 4th.

Clematis Street is known as the epicenter for nightlife in West Palm Beach, however the area also offers an assortment of boutiques, markets and brunch spots for daytime fun. Just a block off the main strip, you'll find *Bee Organics* (23 Datura St, West Palm Beach, FL 33401), an amazing



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market filled with unique natural products and groceries, as well as a vegan café open for breakfast and lunch seven days a week. The bright, airy space is the perfect place to start your morning with one of their cold-pressed juices or smoothies, or a daily (by donation) yoga class. If you are feeling more carnivorous, or more Parisian, you’re only a block away from *Le Rendez-vous*, where you can enjoy a refreshing crafted summer cocktail or one of the amazing dishes off their new menu, including everything from a delicious French cheese and charcuterie platter to fresh beef sashimi.

If you are looking for some eye candy, West Palm Beach is also home to many amazing art galleries and museums. There are over 200 arts and cultural organization throughout Palm Beach County, providing over 42,000 offerings a year. In fact, in March 2015, the Kennedy Center’s National Committee for the Performing Arts bestowed their biannual NCPA award for arts advocacy to the President and CEO of the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County, Rena Blades (More on this in our forthcoming Lake Worth/Delray round up). Although the galleries and collections on the island have garnered attention for years, it is clear the art scene across the bridge is thriving, and should not to be ignored.

The *Paul Fisher Gallery* (33 Flamingo Dr, West Palm Beach, FL 33401) features the works of both local and internationally acclaimed artists, including Dale Chihuly, Serge Strosberg, and Edwina Sandys. Now with a second 5,000 square foot location at 218 Clematis Street, Paul Fisher has earned his accolades as one of South Florida’s pioneer gallerists.

JUST SOUTH OF downtown West Palm Beach, nestled in the quaint historic neighborhood of Flamingo Park, is the newly renovated *Norton Museum* (1451 S Olive Ave, West Palm Beach, FL 33401). The 122,500 square foot fa-

cility boasts over 7,000 works of art spanning the centuries. While the Norton has been a staple of the Palm Beach art scene for decades, only a few blocks away you will find the new hybrid restaurant/market/café/artspace *EmKo* (411 Claremore Dr, West Palm Beach, FL 33401). *EmKo*’s restaurant *JEREVE* has already received rave reviews from the locals, and now they are putting the finishing touches on *A.I.R.*, an acronym for Artist Independent Re-



public—which had its public debut in April, and promises its visitors an amazing display of visual works from fashion shows to fine art exhibits.

Continue your art tour with a visit to *Whitespace* (2805 N. Australian Ave. West Palm Beach, FL 33407), the private contemporary art collection of Elayne and Marvin Mordes. The 8,000 square foot space is part museum, part exhibition space and part loft-style home of the Mordes

who have been collecting art for over 30 years. The intended goal of Whitespace is to fund a granting program for Arts & Art Education in Palm Beach County through the Community Foundation. Although much of the space houses their permanent collect, the Mordes have allotted part of the facility to a rotating project called *Whitebox* – a series of curated exhibits that features works of emerging artists, both local and interational, who are selected





based on their high level of vision and creativity.

When evening sets downtown, the lazy pace of its daytime amblers is replaced with the neon glows of nightclub signs and a muddled mixture of music and raucous conversation. Clematis Street is lined with dozens of bars and restaurants that are sure to satiate all your imbibing needs.

If crafted cocktails are your poison, head on over to *The Alchemist Gastropub* (223 Clematis St, West Palm Beach, FL 33401) and see Keith at the bar for an authentic Old Fashioned—try it smoked or with different bitters, or stirred with a stick of bacon to add some savory sweetness. The Alchemist’s vintage vibe will make it easy to forget that there’s a Starbucks across the street.

Speaking of coffee, just walk a few blocks west on Clematis and you can buy yourself a second wind at *Subculture Coffee* (509 Clematis St, West Palm Beach, FL 33401). Subculture roasts and serves coffee in-house from 7am to midnight alongside fresh pastries, sandwiches and juices. They also serve beer and wine for the non-coffee drinkers. Right next door you can grab a bite at *Hullabaloo*, which features wood-fire oven pizza (among other things) and one of my favorite brunch menus on the block (I recommend the oven roasted double yolk farm fresh egg and a bottomless mimosa).

These are just a few of the places that should inspire you to leave the island, and are mere minutes away from Palm Beach. Check back in our next issue for the best of *North Palm Beach* as we continue to explore *Palm Beach: Off The Island*. ■

