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Palm Beach a great winter escape

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PALM BEACH COUNTY, Fla. -- Life is short. There's a clock ticking and at my age the hands are ticking faster. I decided at the last minute to leave my world behind and head for a little exploration and relaxation in what's described as "America's First Resort Destination," Palm Beach County, Fla. (www.palmBeachFL.com or 1-800-833-5733).

Palm Beach

Palm Beach is on a beautiful, skinny 25-kilometre-long island that's separated by the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway. It is a year-round town of 10,000 (it grows to 30,000 during the winter months) that makes a statement about style and sophistication. It's where assorted high rollers, billionaire industrialists, designers, movie stars and famous singers not only come to play, but to live. Why? Eighty-year-old life-long resident Marie Jones told me, "It's quiet; we have little, if any, crime, there's perfection and order, and our streets are clean."

She was correct.

The sleek and comfortable Colony Hotel (www.thecolonypalmbeach.com or 1-800-521-5525) was my home for the weekend.

You'll pay for the pleasure but the memories are worth it.

My first day was spent at the hotel's gorgeous pool and the nearby beach where I soaked up the warm 28°C weather as a gentle breeze drifted in from the Atlantic Ocean. It was a delicious moment made sweeter by the fact that back home it was freezing.

In the evening, I had dinner in the Colony's Royal Room Cabaret where Broadway Singer Avery Sommers wowed the sold-out dinner crowd. Later, I hung out with the well-heeled in the hotel's cool Polo Lounge listening and dancing to a Motown dance band.

Next morning I took a tour in a beetle bug with my guide, Leslie Diver (info@islandlivingph.com). She drove along South Ocean Beach Blvd. (aka Billionaire's Row) and pointed out homes of the 22 billionaires who live here. Some included homes owned by Rod Stewart (he might have been the guy bringing in the mail), Rush Limbaugh, Donald Trump, Ann Coulter, Canadian Conrad Black and David Koch, the fourth richest man in America.

We visited the must-see Henry Flagler Museum (www.flagemuseum.us) and saw outside the museum a giant kapok tree planted in the 1890s.

Afternoon was spent along tree-lined Worth Ave. (only a block from the hotel) known as the Rodeo Drive of the East Coast. Bring lots of money. You'll find an impressive collection of shops like Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Chanel, Gucci and Tiffany's. When you're here don't miss seeing the historic town hall and fire station, the clock tower and the Living Wall.

Contact George Bailey at wonderful.life@sympatico.ca

For More Information

www.VISITFLORIDA.com or 1-866-972-5280