

The legendary Blue Monster at Doral: feared by many, tamed by few



South East Florida

Battle the Blue Monster, tackle a giant steak, shop till you drop and play Florida's oldest course in Florida's ritziest region of all

If you can drag yourself away from the beaches, chic resorts, shopping and pulsating nightlife of Florida's South East, you'll find an amazing array of fairways and greens just waiting to be played. All along this part of the Sunshine State there are world-class golf resorts and courses in places whose names ooze with glamour and pizzazz — Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Boca Raton and Palm Beach among them.

Miami has almost two dozen public courses from municipal to luxury resorts. You can even tee off on Miami Beach, a few blocks from the eclectic and brightly-coloured buildings of the South Beach Art Deco District. The City of Miami Beach-owned Miami Beach Golf Club opened as the Bayshore Golf Course in 1923 as part of developer Carl Fisher's master plan to lure wealthy urbanites to this former swamp-land. It recently underwent a \$10 million facelift at the hands of illustrious golf

"surgeon", noted architect Arthur Hills.

Doral Golf Resort is home to five courses including the 7,295-yard Blue Monster, where the PGA Tour's Ford Championship is played. Its name is well-deserved. It has terrified golfers, me included, for 45 years. From huge lakes where even Nessie might feel at home to gaping bunkers which rear up menacingly out of the fairways, everything about it is monstrous, no matter which tee you play. The Bermuda rough takes no prisoners either while the famous towering fountain waits to swat misdirected approach shots to the last green. Among its other courses is the Great White Course, a desertscape design by Greg Norman. As well as the golf, 2,400-acre Doral has a lavish 693-room resort hotel and spa operated by the Marriott group.

Don Shula's Hotel and Golf Club, in Miami Lakes, is a more intimate resort named after the former coach of local gridiron team the



DORAL GOLF RESORT

Miami Dolphins, with lots of memorabilia in homage to "the winningest coach in NFL history" as he is known. You might rub shoulders with the likes of a more recent sport legend, Michael Jordan, on its course. Then you can try and get your chops round a 48-ounce porterhouse steak in the original Shula's steakhouse which launched a chain now spanning 11 states. Those who finish it get to join the 48-Ounce Club, of which there are 26,000 members.

The Mediterranean-style Fairmont Turnberry Isle Resort and Club's 19 tennis courts, spa, private ocean club and marina are augmented by two Robert Trent Jones Sr courses.





The 14th at Don Shula's Hotel and Golf Club

WHERE TO STAY

Doral Golf Resort & Spa

Contact: 00-1-305-592-2000
doralresort.com

The Fairmont Turnberry Isle Resort and Club

Contact: 00-1-305-932-6200
turnberryisle.com

The Diplomat Country Club & Spa

Contact: 00-1-954-602-6000
westin.com

The Breakers

Contact: 00-1-561-655-6611
thebreakers.com

Boca Raton Resort & Club

Contact: 00-1561-447-3000
bocaresort.com

The tougher, 7,003-yard South keeps its signature hole until last, the par-5 18th finishing with an approach shot to a treacherous island green.

Fort Lauderdale, just up the coast, has several gems among its 50 courses. Of the Bonaventure Country Club's two 18-hole tracks, Joe Lee's 7,001-yard East is a classic Florida layout whose trademark is a cascading waterfall in front of the par-3 3rd hole's plateau green. Accommodation is at the adjacent resort and spa hotel.

Other excellent golf can be found at the Joe Lee course of the Diplomat Country Club, TPC at Heron Bay and The Club at Emerald Hills, where the area's toughest challenge comes on its 7,280-yard Bruce Devlin design, with a slope index of 146 and water in play on 12 holes.

Fort Lauderdale tempts visitors with shopping at one of America's largest designer outlet malls, Sawgrass Mills, a stylish and lively oceanfront promenade, a maze of waterways served by water taxis, and the nearby Everglades where you can hop on an airboat to view the alligators and other wildlife.

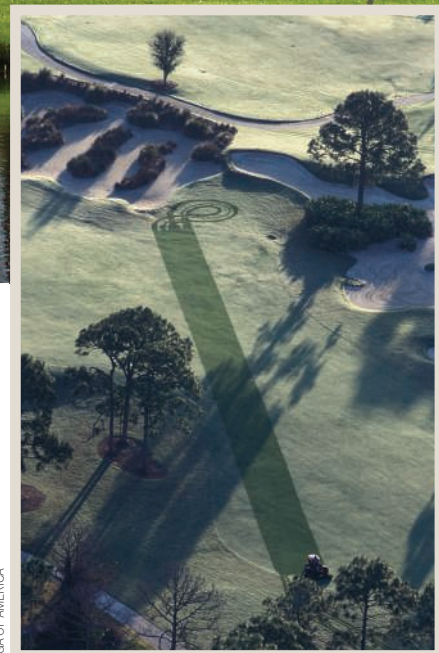
Palm Beach grandly calls itself Florida's

Golf Capital, but then it does have 160 golf courses. Grand is certainly the word for some of the luxurious golf resorts in this well-heeled destination.

Built by rail magnate Henry Morrison Flagler, who drove the railway down Florida's East Coast, Italian Renaissance-style The Breakers has

been an oceanfront landmark for nearly 80 years and was synonymous with the cream of American society, numbering the Vanderbilts, Rockefellers and Astors as well as US presidents and European nobility among its guests. It is still run by the Flagler family today.

After a \$145 million makeover, the reborn resort exudes a far more relaxed feel while re-



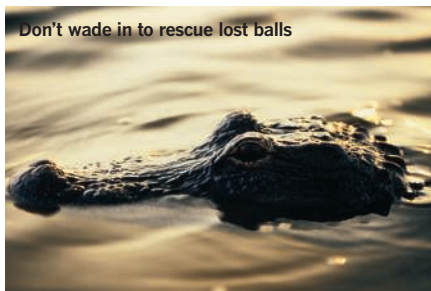
PGA OF AMERICA

PGA Village, Port St Lucie, the only PGA of America owned-and-operated facility open to the public

taining its regal grace. Casual sophistication is the watchword. It is also very family-friendly, and has an under-12s advisory board for kids' activities.

The Breakers has 36 holes of golf. The 6,167-yard Ocean Course is Florida's oldest, having originally been laid out in 1896. It was rebuilt and extended in 2000 and has the historic hotel as a stunning backdrop. The other course is a more demanding 7,104-yard Rees Jones redesign which opened in 2004.

The stately Boca Raton Resort & Club is another grand dame, dating back to 1926, where guest accommodation includes the cloistered Mediterranean elegance of the original building designed by celebrated architect Addison Mizner. The resort has two 18-hole



Don't wade in to rescue lost balls

WHERE TO PLAY

Doral Golf Resort

Five courses including the Blue Monster: 7,288 yards, par 72, \$200-\$210. Other courses \$165-\$200

Contact: 00-1-305-592-2000
doralresort.com
Monster by name and nature

Don Shula's Hotel & Golf Club

6,982 yards, par 72
\$70-\$90

Contact: 00-1-305-820-8124
shulathleticandgolfclub.com
Work up your appetite before tackling Shula's monster steaks

The Fairmont Turnberry Isle Resort and Club

North: 6,403 yards, par 70
South: 7,003 yards, par 72
\$95-\$130, cart fee \$48

Contact: 00-1-305-933-6929
turnberryisle.com
Its famous finishing island green sinks many a good round

Bonaventure Country Club

East: 7,001 yards, par 72, \$60-\$70
West: 6,128 yards, par 70, \$50-\$60

Contact: 00-1-954-389-2100
golfbonaventure.com
Waterfall par-3 is the highlight of its two Florida classics

Diplomat Country Club

6,728 yards, par 72
\$100-\$209

Contact: 00-1-954-883-4444
diplomatcountryclub.com
They'll even bring your food out to you on this five-star track

Boca Raton Resort & Club

Resort: 6,253 yards, par 71
Country Club: 6,585 yds, par 72
\$155, cart \$27 per person

Contact: 00-1-561-447-3078
bocaresort.com
Cloistered, historic accommodation and stylish golf

The Breakers

Ocean: 6,167 yards, par 70, \$50
Rees Jones: 7,104 yards, par 72, \$90

Contact: 00-1-561-659-8474
thebreakers.com
Florida's oldest course alongside the East Coast grande dame

PGA National Resort

Five courses; Champions: 7,048 yards, par 72, \$84-\$105, cart \$25 per person. Other courses \$58-\$79 plus cart

Contact: 00-1-561-627-1800
pga-resorts.com
Ex-Ryder Cup course Champions heads a great quintet.



PETER ELLEGARD



Take an Everglades day trip

courses as well as 30 tennis courts, a spa with 44 treatment rooms, private beach and marina plus numerous other activities.

The PGA National Resort, in Palm Beach Gardens, has five championship courses by luminaries including Tom and George Fazio, Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. It hosted the 1983 Ryder Cup, in which the European team captained by Tony Jacklin was narrowly beaten by Jack's lads.

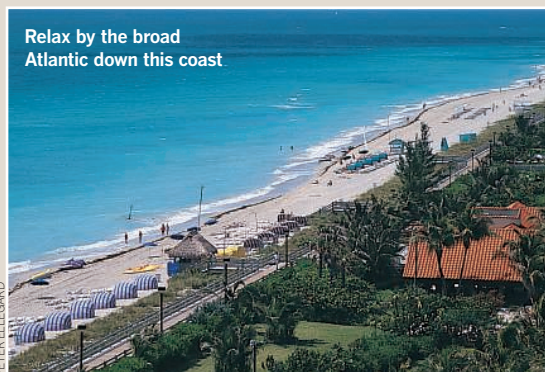
Further north in Port St Lucie, the PGA Village is the only facility open to the public which is owned and operated by the Professional Golf Association of America. It has three courses — two by Tom Fazio and one by Pete Dye — as well as a 35-acre PGA Learning Centre and resort accommodation.

And if you still want more golf, try the Donald Ross 1923-vintage Delray Beach Golf Club or the highly-rated Emerald Dunes course by Tom Fazio.



PETER ELLEGARD

Relax by the broad Atlantic down this coast



PETER ELLEGARD

South East Florida Facts

WHERE IS IT

South East Florida stretches down the state's Atlantic seaboard to the Florida Keys. Miami is its main international gateway and there are direct daily, non-stop flights there from the UK by American Airlines (aa.com; 0845-7789-789), **British Airways** (ba.com; 0870-850-9-850) and Virgin Atlantic Airways (www.virgin-atlantic.com; 08705-747-747). Regional flights serve Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale. **Information:** miamilandbeaches.com, 01444 443355; sunny.org, 01628-7788; palmbeachfl.com, 020-8876-2742.

KEY ATTRACTIONS

■ People-watch from a bar or cafe in one of the restored **art deco buildings** of Miami's hip, happening South Beach before letting your hair down in one of the many nightclubs which attract the rich, famous and fun-loving. ■ **The Florida Keys** is a 120-mile-long chain of islands linked to the mainland by the Overseas Highway. Reasons to visit include John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park at Key Largo and the eclectic atmosphere and attractions of Key West.

■ The region's **undersea world** is a big attraction for visiting divers. Explore coral reefs in the Florida Keys' marine sanctuaries or natural and artificial reefs — wrecks intentionally sunk as marine habitats — off the Keys, Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach. ■ Hit the shops at numerous centres including sprawling outlet shopping mall **Sawgrass Mills**, with 300 name-brand stores. Or browse the exclusive designer shops of Miami's Bal

Harbour or ritzy Worth Avenue in Palm Beach.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

■ Killer whales, dolphins and sea lions are among the stars which have wowed visitors for nearly 50 years at **Miami Seaquarium**. ■ **The Everglades** are right on this region's doorstep. You can take airboat rides, swamp safaris and learn about the history of Florida's Seminole tribe on the Big Cypress and Hollywood Seminole Indian reservations near Fort Lauderdale. ■ Combine a visit to Florida with a **cruiise**. Ships sailing from Miami and Fort Lauderdale's Port Everglades offer everything from daily cruises to nowhere to Caribbean and Latin American voyages and have extensive on-board facilities. ■ Golfers aged 21 and under can play any **PGA Village** course free after 11am on weekdays and 2pm at weekends during the summer. Kid-friendly tees range from 2,200-3,800 yards.

SOUTH EAST FLORIDA FACTS

■ Nearly 3.5 million **passengers** cruised from the Port of Miami in 2004. ■ **Palm Beach County** has more golf courses than any other county in the US. ■ **Lake Okeechobee**, inland of Palm Beach, is the second largest freshwater lake in the US and the largest in Florida, at 700 square miles. ■ **The Seminole Indians** have never signed a peace treaty with the US government and so are officially still at war. ■ Palm Beach is regarded as Florida's **Rolls Royce capital**. It even has a Silver Shadow sunk off its beaches for divers to explore. You can rent a Rolls Royce Phantom in Palm Beach for \$3,500 a day or \$21,000 a week.