

A wooden boardwalk with a railing winds through a dense mangrove forest. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and blue, suggesting sunset or sunrise. The trees are lush and green, with some bare branches visible. The boardwalk is made of light-colored wood and curves gently to the right.

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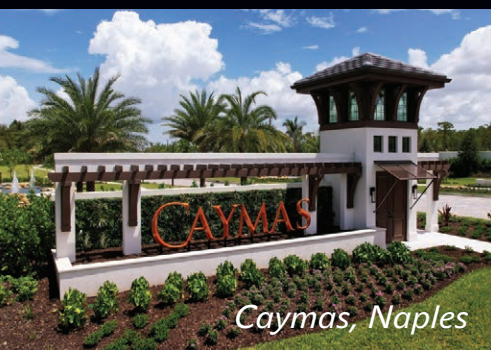
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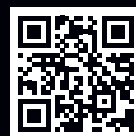
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2026 Newcomers Guide to Lee, Collier and Charlotte Counties

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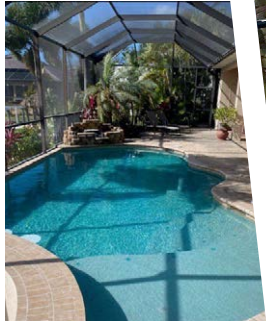
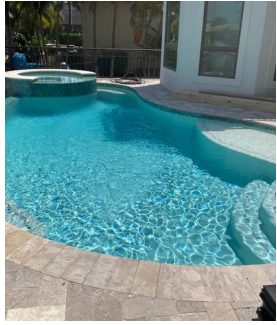
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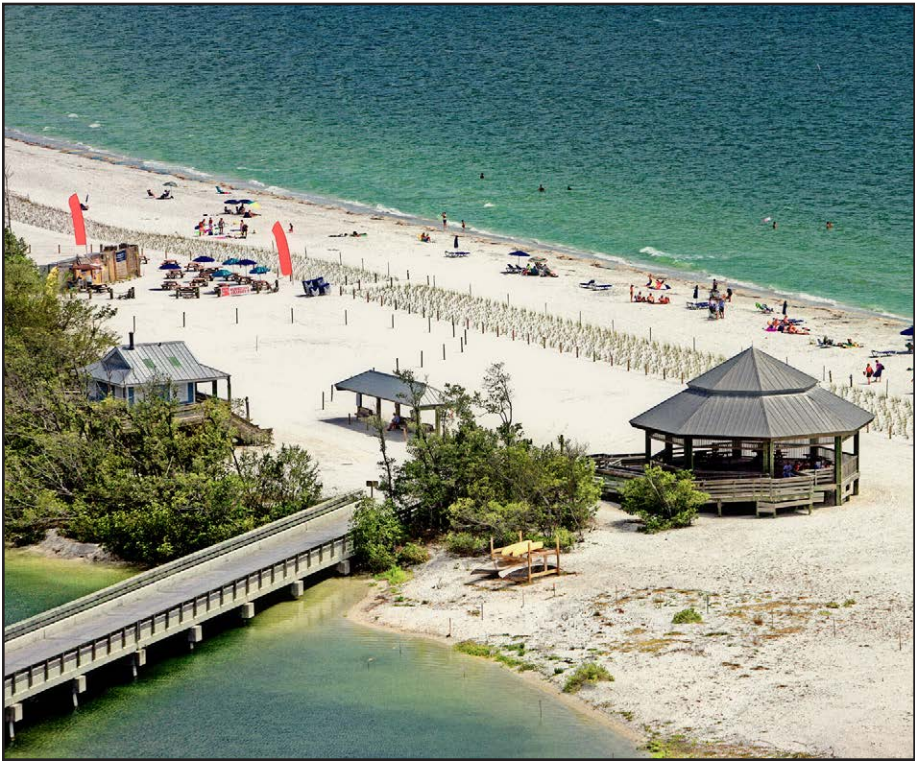


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LOVER'S KEY STATE PARK / COURTESY PHOTO

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SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S WEATHER MAKES EVERY SEASON A SPORTS SEASON



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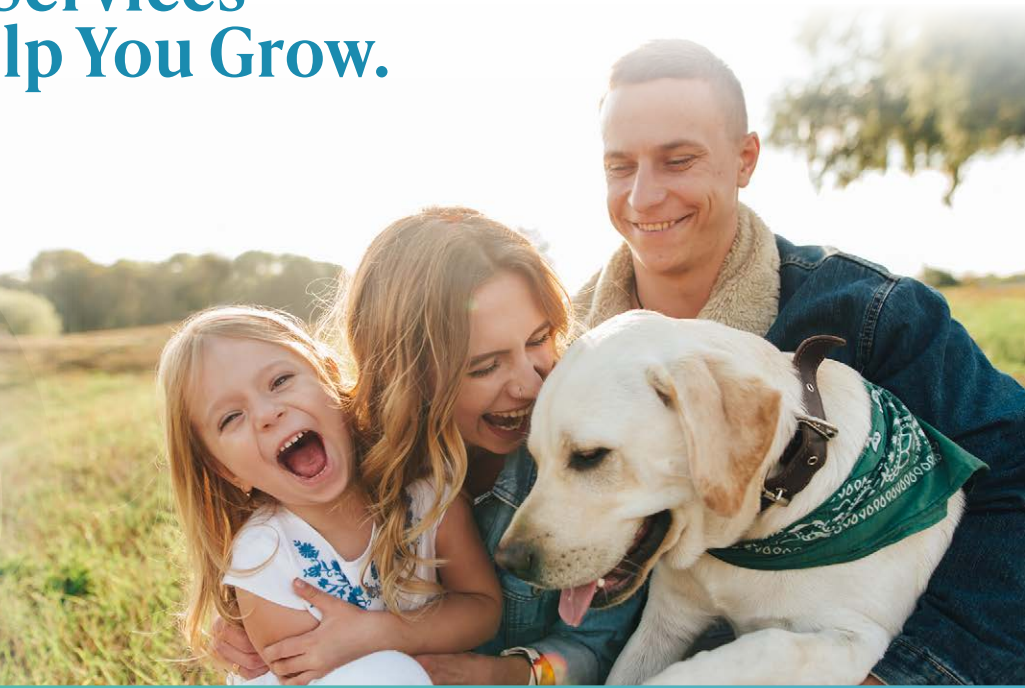


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LEE COUNTY

Alva

Tucked along the Caloosahatchee River east of Fort Myers, this quiet, rural town continues to feel like Old Florida. Alva's citrus groves, cattle pastures, and oak-shaded trails offer space for horseback riding and outdoor recreation. Though often assumed to honor inventor Thomas Alva Edison, the town was named for the small white "alva" flowers discovered here by sea captain Peter Nelson in the late 1800s.

Babcock Ranch

Straddling the Lee and Charlotte county line, Babcock Ranch holds the distinction of being America's first solar-powered town. Designed for sustainable living and outdoor adventure, its walkable neighborhoods, preserved greenways and freshwater lakes invite residents to bike, kayak and explore. Founder's Square remains a lively center for outdoor concerts, restaurants and family gatherings nearly every weekend. With festivals, wellness activities and top-rated schools within walking distance, Babcock Ranch consistently sets the standard for eco-conscious Florida living.

Babcock Ranch

Perched on Gasparilla Island, Boca Grande remains one of Florida's most exclusive coastal enclaves, where pastel cottages, turquoise water and understated elegance meet. The historic Gasparilla Inn, built in 1911, features a world-class golf course, spa and dining venues that attract visitors from around the globe. Bicyclists and beachgoers enjoy the scenic six-mile trail that winds past streets lined with banyan trees and white-sand beaches. Famous for tarpon fishing and timeless charm, Boca Grande continues to embody Gulf Coast grace.

Bonita Springs

Between Naples and Estero, Bonita Springs blends laid-back coastal living

with creative energy. Visitors head to Lovers Key State Park for kayaking and wildlife viewing, while locals frequent the Old 41 corridor for outdoor dining and community events. Shangri-La Springs — a 1920s hotel transformed into a wellness retreat — reflects the town's history, while the Centers for the Arts Bonita Springs and the Wonder Gardens are hallmarks of its rich cultural identity. The downtown area is home to many unique restaurants, breweries and live music venues. Growth here has been steady, yet Bonita's coastal elegance and small-town spirit endure.

Cape Coral

Known as the "Waterfront Wonderland," Cape Coral boasts more than 400 miles of navigable canals — more than Venice, Italy. Founded in the late 1950s by brothers Leonard and Jack Rosen, it has grown into the largest city in Southwest Florida. Today, Cape Coral is a haven for boaters, anglers and families, with more than 1,500 acres of parks and preserves, a bustling farmers market in South Cape and a growing downtown scene. Modern and approachable, The Cape seamlessly blends its waterways, community and coastal lifestyle.

Estero

Once home to the Koreshan Unity settlement, whose utopian ideals are preserved at Koreshan State Park, Estero has transformed into one of Lee County's most dynamic residential and commercial areas. Its location between Naples and Fort Myers makes it a hub for shopping and entertainment, anchored by Coconut Point, Miromar Outlets and Hertz Arena. Concerts, hockey games, and festivals draw visitors, while riverfront parks and nature trails preserve ties to the past. Estero's balance of growth and green space reflects its evolution from pioneer settlement to thriving suburb.

Fort Myers

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Fort Myers remains the cultural heart of Lee County. Once home to the Calusa and later the winter retreat of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, the city now thrives on its blend of heritage and innovation. The downtown River District showcases restored architecture, independent dining and a thriving arts scene that is home to the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center, Florida Repertory Theatre and Laboratory Theater of Florida. With spring training, concerts, and waterfront festivals, Fort Myers continues to embody Southwest Florida's unique energy.

Fort Myers Beach

Reimagined and resilient after Hurricane Ian, Fort Myers Beach continues to rebuild with heart and purpose. Stretching seven miles along Estero Island, it remains a favorite for shelling, dolphin tours and Gulf-front dining. The Mound House — a restored 1906 home atop an ancient Calusa shell mound — connects visitors to the island's earliest roots. With new restaurants, piers and beach cottages opening, Fort Myers Beach blends renewal with nostalgia, welcoming locals and visitors to marvel at the beauty of spectacular sunsets and the resilience of local spirit.

Lehigh Acres

Lehigh Acres has grown into one of Florida's largest unincorporated communities, offering both affordability and access to Naples and Fort Myers. More than 120,000 residents enjoy the neighborhood parks, preserves, and golf



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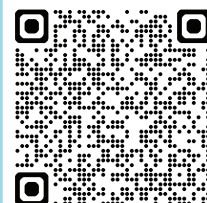


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courses, including Westminster Golf Club. Outdoor enthusiasts explore Hickey Creek Wildlife Area and Frank Mann Preserve, while boaters use the Alva Boat Ramp to reach the Caloosahatchee River. With steady growth, new schools, and expanding businesses, Lehigh Acres continues to strike a balance between suburban comfort and its rural character.

Pine Island

Rustic, artistic and surrounded by mangroves, Pine Island feels worlds apart from modern Florida. The state's largest Gulf Coast island is known for its mango farms, fishing guides and local galleries. Visitors can explore the Calusa Heritage Trail or take a ferry to Cayo Costa State Park for a day of shelling and solitude. The island's smaller communities — Matlacha, Bokeelia, and St. James City — each have their own unique character, while Tarpon Lodge remains a landmark for old-Florida dining and hospitality.

Sanibel and Captiva

Sanibel and Captiva Islands capture an idyllic vision of tropical living. The islands feature 25 miles of bike trails, world-class shelling and some of Florida's most cherished wildlife habitats. The J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge draws birdwatchers from around the world, while the Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum and Lighthouse Beach Park remain enduring landmarks. Beloved institutions like The Bubble Room and Keylime Bistro preserve the islands' whimsical side. Though hurricane recovery continues, Sanibel and Captiva's coastal charm and ecological focus remain timeless.

COLLIER COUNTY

Ave Maria

Thirty miles east of Naples, Ave Maria continues to evolve as one of Collier County's newest and most distinctive communities. Founded in 2005 through a partnership between Ave Maria Development, Barron Collier Companies, and Domino's Pizza founder Tom Monaghan, the town officially opened in 2007 at the same time as Ave Maria University. Its dramatic cathedral, inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's work, remains its architectural and spiritual centerpiece. With its parks, schools and family-focused

design, Ave Maria has matured into a thriving modern community in the heart of the countryside.

Everglades City

Known as the "Gateway to the Ten Thousand Islands," Everglades City remains a historic fishing village surrounded by mangroves and unspoiled wilderness. Once the Collier County seat, it retains its Old Florida flavor with airboat tours, stone crab shacks and stilted cottages along the Barron River. The town proudly hosts the annual Everglades Seafood Festival each February, celebrating local heritage and the start of stone crab season. With nearby access to Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve, it remains a rare link between Florida's past and its wild, natural heart.

Immokalee

In the Seminole language, Immokalee means "my home" — a fitting name for this agricultural powerhouse in northern Collier County. Known for producing much of America's winter tomatoes, the community thrives on its deep roots in farming and cultural diversity. The Seminole Casino Hotel enhances the area's entertainment and dining options, while the Immokalee Pioneer Museum at Roberts Ranch preserves the stories of early settlers. Surrounded by wide-open land and nature preserves, Immokalee continues to strike a balance between modern progress and the hardworking heritage that defines it.

Marco Island

The largest of the Ten Thousand Islands, Marco Island remains a tropical playground just south of Naples. Marco's six miles of sugar-white sand and clear Gulf waters make it ideal for kayaking, paddleboarding and sunset sailing. Tigertail Beach draws birdwatchers and shell collectors, while the Marco Island Historical Museum showcases the island's Calusa roots and the famed Key Marco Cat. Elegant resorts, local dining and year-round festivals maintain Marco's reputation as a laid-back yet luxurious coastal retreat.

Naples

Perennially ranked among the nation's best places to live, Naples shines with a

blend of sophistication and coastal ease. Its beaches — from Lowdermilk Park to Clam Pass — are known for their white sand and gentle surf, while Fifth Avenue South and Third Street South provide boutique shopping, dining and art. Tin City retains a nostalgic, maritime feel, and Artis—Naples cements the city's thriving arts scene. With elegant neighborhoods, golf courses and community events, Naples continues to define the good life on Florida's Gulf Coast.

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Englewood

Straddling the Charlotte and Sarasota county line, Englewood carries the relaxed rhythm of a classic beach town. Founded in 1896 by three Illinois brothers, it quickly gained a reputation for fishing, boating, and winter retreats. Today, Manasota Key's pristine beaches and Englewood's eleven golf courses make it a haven for recreation. Enriched by live music, art shows and local theatre, Englewood blends small-town authenticity with creative energy.

Port Charlotte

At the meeting of the Peace River and Charlotte Harbor, Port Charlotte thrives as a retreat for those who love life on the water. With 165 miles of canals and convenient access to open water, it's ideal for boating, fishing and kayaking. Tippecanoe Environmental Park and Charlotte Sports Park — spring training home of the Tampa Bay Rays — highlight its blend of recreation and community life. From local seafood spots to quiet parks, Port Charlotte offers a relaxed and affordable Gulf lifestyle.

Punta Gorda

Along the Charlotte Harbor shoreline, Punta Gorda's 2.5-mile Harborwalk leads past marinas, public art displays and the popular Fishermen's Village. Visitors explore the Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens and the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, while animal lovers frequent Octagon Wildlife Sanctuary and Iguanaland. Known for its tarpon fishing, art festivals and walkable downtown area, Punta Gorda captures the easy rhythm of Southwest Florida living. ■



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BY CARLIE ADMIRE

Carlie.admire@floridaweekly.com

Florida just celebrated 180 years, and there's no better place to see why the Sunshine State continues to sparkle than Southwest Florida. From the invention of key lime pie and Gatorade to pioneering frozen orange concentrate, Florida has always served up flavor with flair. Southwest Florida keeps that tradition alive, straight from paradise with endless stretches of sandy coastline, vibrant music festivals, artsy galleries and fresh honey and Gulf seafood. From stone crabs to dockside oysters and shrimp—adventure, culture and sunshine meet beneath every sway-palm.

Southwest Florida isn't just a destination; it's a state of mind.

Gators, grapefruits, and glorious legends

History, wildlife, and art converge in SWFL. Step back in time at the Naples Historical Society Museum, opening this fall, or explore Punta Gorda's Military Heritage Museum. The America's Military and First Responders Museum at Naples Airport showcases over 10,000 artifacts spanning the Revolutionary War to modern conflicts. Wander the Edison & Ford Winter Estates — where the inventor's 1886 home and laboratory sit amid fragrant gardens.

Nature and beauty abound at the Naples Botanical Garden, home to more than 1,000 plant species across 170 acres. Stroll through the Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens or the tropical trails at Wonder Gardens, admiring at flamingos and exotic birds. Meet vibrant iguanas, snakes, turtles and gators at Punta Gorda's Iguana Land.

Taste Florida straight from the grove with fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice and swirls of orange ice cream at Sun Harvest or pick your own berries at local family farms like Blueberry Bunch and Farmer Mike's U-Pick. While thrill-seekers can glide across swamps on airboats, spotting gators and even follow the trails of the elusive Swamp Ape.



LEE COUNTY VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

Sunny beaches come alive as sand sculpting competitions transform the shoreline into temporary galleries. This year, the 35th Annual American Sand Sculpting Championship returns to Fort Myers Beach, drawing over 15,000 attendees to celebrate world-class artistry, creativity and community spirit. From Nov. 20-24, visitors can marvel at the awe-inspiring work of Master and Advanced Amateur Sculptors from around the world, each bringing their extraordinary visions to life in sand.

Upcoming Highlights:

- *Edison Festival of Lights Grand Parade – Fort Myers, Feb. 21, 2026:* Southwest Florida's largest night parade.
- *Swamp Buggy Races – Naples, Jan. 18, Feb. 22, April 4, 2026:* a series of racing spectacles featuring custom-built vehicles that speed through water-filled tracks.
- *Fort Myers Seafood & Music Festival – Fort Myers, Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2026:* Waterfront dining with local tunes.

Burgers, bubble rooms, and food truck frenzy

SWFL's culinary scene is as playful as it is flavorful. With over 150 new restaurants and over 34 breweries and taprooms, there's always a new spot to explore. Downtown Fort Myers heats things up at Sip and Sizzle with shaken martinis, while hidden gems like Escondido Lounge — a speakeasy behind a frothy door— and the moody Hogwash provide

a spirited nightlife escape. Margaritaville and Sugar Shack offer sunsets with live steel drums and tropical drinks, the perfect soundtrack for the Gulf Coast's breezy evenings.

Naples is buzzing with bold flavors and culinary surprises this season. **The Rooster Food + Drink** caught national attention when Guy Fieri featured it on a November 2025 episode of *"Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives,"* with its inven-

tive take on seafood and comfort classics, including the standout Texas Reuben. At The 239, cocktails are made to impress — with fresh-pressed juices, sprinkled rims, and garnishes of tiny rubber ducks on dried grapefruit lily pads. Pair them with flavored popcorn and shareable small plates for a Naples night equal parts coastal and creative.

In Fort Myers, Swamp Cat Brewery pours adventure into every pint, with beers inspired by Navy veterans' travels and Florida-famed panther. Enjoy the tangy Wild Blood Orange or the dreamy Everglades Misty Hazy in the beer garden, where individual food kitchens satisfy every craving served to the rhythm of live music.

SWFL's food scene mixes old Florida charm with playful twists, from Florida Burger Boy's Swamp Stomper Burger and Key Lime Pie Shake to the return and resilience of the retro Bubble Room on Captiva with towering desserts. Food trucks line Celebration Park in Naples, Riverside Rooftop in Bonita Springs offers cocktails with a view, Backyard Social in Estero blends fun and flavor and the new Slipway Food Truck Park & Marina in Cape Coral lets guests dock and dine right on the water.

Upcoming Bites & Sips:

- *Annual Taste of Punta Gorda and Beyond – Punta Gorda, Mar. 2026* Street food and live entertainment.
- *Bonita Springs Brew Fest – Bonita Springs, Feb. 2026:* Local brews paired with gourmet bites.



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- Our Cape Coral office is moving to our brand new, spacious, state-of-the-art building at 1606 Santa Barbara Blvd. in January.
- We are still here to serve you in our Fort Myers offices on Park Royal Drive and at The Forum.
- We offer a full-spectrum of obstetrics, gynecology and urogynecology, with OBs & midwives performing deliveries at Cape Coral Hospital and HealthPark Medical Center.
- We now offer diagnostic mammography and breast ultrasound in addition to 3D screening mammograms for a seamless experience in breast care.
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SWFL INSIDER

- *Naples Winter Wine Festival* – Jan. 2026: Premier wine auction and chef-curated dinners.
- *68th Annual Fort Myers Beach Lions Club Shrimp Festival* – Mar. 2026: Parade, carnival, and live music.

Nature, noises, and national awards

Florida's 175 state parks span over 815,000 acres and have earned four National Gold Medals for excellence. From mangroves to beaches, SWFL is alive with exploration. Kayak through the winding mangroves at Lovers Key, wander bamboo trails and admire historic sculptures at Koreschan State Park, or paddle through tidal marshes at Charlotte Harbor Preserve. Hikers can explore Seminole State Park or the vast wilderness of Big Cypress National Preserve, where the iconic Florida panthers, ghost orchids, and native wildlife roam.

Don't miss the electrifying lightning shows over SWFL's parks, with Florida earning its reputation as the Lightning Capital. Meanwhile, shell-covered beaches invite you to stroll the shoreline or recline in the sun, offering award-winning spots for collecting seashells and soaking up the perfect park-side retreat.

Seafood lovers can celebrate the region's bounty at Stone Crab Festivals in Tin City, St. James City and throughout the Everglades. Known as the Stone Crab Capital of the World, claws are locally caught from nearby waters, served chilled and complemented by Florida-famous mustard dipping sauce or a side of melted butter. The festivals clamp onto visitors and locals alike, pairing fresh stone crabs with lively tunes that keep the celebration going long after the sun sets.

Music thrives in lush settings, from the Naples Botanical Garden's Music in the Gardens and the Naples Jazz Festival to the Fort Myers Music Walk and free outdoor concerts across Bonita Springs, bringing melodies to the sunshine.

Nature Highlights:

- *Gulf Coast Orchid Alliance's Orchid Show and Sale* – Nov. 2025: Exotic orchids in full bloom, workshops and sales

from specialty growers.

- *Wonder Gardens* – Bonita Springs, year-round: Historic gardens and wildlife sanctuary.
- *ECHO's Global Food & Farm Festival* – Mar. 2026: Tour a global farm and help make an impact on world hunger.

Shop, splash and swing

SWFL effortlessly blends style, adventure, and relaxation. Bell Tower Shops, Coconut Point, and Miromar Outlets showcase over 140 designer stores along open-air promenades, where shoppers can discover the latest fashions and chic resort-style designs. Downtown Naples and Punta Gorda Mercantile add a local flair, offering boutique treasures, handcrafted goods, and vibrant art for a truly unique shopping experience.

Dive into the newly opened Brightwater Lagoon in North Fort Myers, a six-acre paradise featuring lazy rivers, twisting slides, and swim-up bars perfect for soaking up the Florida sun. In nearby Punta Gorda, Sunseekers offers a rooftop pool retreat where chilled beverages and sparkling views set the stage for ultimate relaxation.

Anglers will find their paradise in SWFL, where the shimmering waters of Cayo Costa and Pine Island Sound are teeming with snook, redfish, and tarpon.

For land lovers, the region hosts more than 150 public and private golf courses, offering lush greens and challenging fairways for players of every skill level. Beat the heat with a round of movie-themed mini golf at HappyLand inside Alamo Drafthouse Cinema in the Mercato, then let the breeze carry you on the 90-minute Fort Myers Pirate Adventure along

Fort Myers Beach — perfect for pirates-in-training of all ages.

Buckle up for a double dose of adrenaline and excitement in Florida. First, soar into thrills at the Florida International Air Show, a volunteer-run nonprofit that brings the skies to life. Over multiple days, nationally renowned performers dazzle crowds with jaw-dropping aerial maneuvers, while static displays of aircraft and military vehicles offer a hands-on look at aviation and space. Whether you are an aviation enthusiast, a history buff or just looking for an unforgettable family outing, Florida International Air Show delivers high-flying thrills and a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the world of flight.

Then, **get ready to rev your engines at the 22nd Annual Cars on 5th Concours**, rolling into **5th Avenue South in Naples in February**, hosted by the Naples Automotive Experience. As Naples' largest one-day car event, it will showcase **over 400 luxury rides** —Ferraris, Lamborghinis, Porsches, Corvettes, and more— filling the avenue with high-octane style and performance. Two spectacular experiences, one unforgettable adventure.

Upcoming play dates:

- *World's Richest Tarpon Tournament* – Mar. 2026: Anglers compete for record tarpon and top prizes.
- *Classic Cars on 5th Concours d'Elegance* – Feb. 2026: Exotic and vintage collector cars.
- *37th Annual Christmas Boat Parade* – Dec. 2025: Festive lights on the water.
- *Collier County Fair* – March 2026: Carnival rides, games and live entertainment.

Why SWFL is simply irresistible

With 180 years of history, Southwest Florida is a sun-soaked haven brimming with charm, flavors, and adventure. From golden beaches to hidden mangrove trails, every corner offers something to explore, taste, and remember. Visit and experience it for yourself— Southwest Florida isn't just a destination, it's a feeling. **Come for the sun, stay for the soul.** ■



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CULTURAL VENUES



DAVID WISHTISCHIN / FLORIDA WEEKLY

LEE COUNTY

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Since the 1970s, this community hub has supported visual and performing arts through exhibitions, classes and theater productions.

10091 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers
239-939-2787 | artinlee.org

Arts Bonita / Arts Bonita Performing Arts

At the Performing Arts Center, the Hinman and Moe auditoriums present live shows and classes. The Visual Arts Center features galleries, studios and year-round instruction.

Performing Arts Center -
10150 Bonita Beach Road, Bonita Springs
Visual Arts Center -
26100 Old 41 Road, Bonita Springs
239-495-8989 | artcenterbonita.org

Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall

At FSW, the hall houses Southwest Florida's most significant proscenium stage, seating 1,874 and presents Broadway shows, concerts, dance and private events.

13350 FSW Parkway, Fort Myers
239-481-4849 | bbmannpah.com

The Belle Theatre

The Belle Theatre produces live shows and education for all ages, from full-scale musicals to workshops and community open-mic nights.

2708 Santa Barbara Blvd. #13, Cape Coral
239-323-5533 | thebelletheatre.com

BIG ARTS

On Sanibel, BIG ARTS presents workshops, lectures by leading thinkers and a full slate of visual and performing arts.

900 Dunlop Road, Sanibel
239-395-0900 | bigarts.org

Bob Rauschenberg Gallery at FSW

Named for Robert Rauschenberg, this contemporary gallery offers innovative

exhibitions, public talks, workshops and special events.

8099 College Parkway, Fort Myers
239-489-9313 | bobrauschenberggallery.com

Bower School of Music & the Arts at FGCU

FGCU's Bower School presents over 150 events annually and prepares students for careers in the arts. Cross-disciplinary work includes the Crossroads of Art and Science residency.

10501 FGCU Blvd. S., Fort Myers
239-590-1000 | fgcu.edu/cas/bsma

Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre

For 30 years, Broadway Palm has welcomed over 170,000 guests per season. The complex includes a 382-seat dinner theatre, an 86-seat black box, meeting spaces, a gift shop, a lobby bar and an art gallery, with eight main-stage musicals, revues, comedies, children's shows, a concert series and 200-plus community events each year.

1380 Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers
239-278-4422 | broadwaypalm.com

Caloosa Sound Amphitheater

This outdoor waterfront venue in downtown Fort Myers presents concerts, festivals and civic events with Caloosahatchee views and modern production facilities.

22101 Edwards Drive, Fort Myers
239-314-3757 | caloosasondamp.com

Cape Café Dessert Theatre

An intimate playhouse where straight

plays and comedies pair with cappuccinos and house-baked sweets. In downtown Cape Coral, small-cast shows are neighborhood-friendly with simple ticketing.

110 NE 2nd Place, Unit 401, Cape Coral
239-363-0848 | capecafetheatre.com

Cultural Park Theater

Founded in 1963 by Herb Strauss, the Cultural Park Theater evolved from a community troupe into a cultural hub, offering productions and educational programs.

528 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral
239-772-5862 | culturalparktheater.org

Florida Repertory Theatre

With 27 years in professional regional theatre, Florida Rep draws more than 87,000 patrons from September through May with comedies, dramas and musicals at the historic Arcade Theatre in the River District.

2268 Bay St., Fort Myers
239-332-4488 | floridarep.org

Fort Myers Theatre

This venue presents musicals and plays, as well as youth and homeschool productions. Theatre Drop-In Day lets kids sample skits, songs, costumes and games.

16120 San Carlos Blvd. #5, Fort Myers
239-323-6570 | ftmyerstheatre.com

Gulf Coast Symphony

Lee County's professional orchestra presents Masterworks, pops, chamber and education programs throughout the county. Headquartered at the Music & Arts Community Center, the Symphony scales to larger halls as programs grow.

13411 Shire Lane, Fort Myers
239-277-1700 | gulfcoastsymphony.org

Gulfshore Opera

Founded in 2014, Gulfshore Opera stages fully produced operas and concerts. Based in Lee County, the company also serves Collier and Charlotte with community choruses and chamber programs.

9911 Corkscrew Road, Suite 105, Estero
239-529-3925 | gulfshoreopera.org



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Harbour View Gallery

An artist-owned cooperative that spotlights local work through juried exhibitions. Set within Cape Harbour, it is situated amid a waterfront district offering dining, shopping and leisure activities.

5789 Cape Harbour Drive, Suite 104, Cape Coral
239-540-5789 | harbourviewgallery.com

Hertz Arena

A multi-purpose sports and entertainment venue with up to 8,000 seats, home to Florida Everblades hockey, concerts and family shows.

11000 Everblades Parkway, Estero
239-948-7825 | hertzarena.com

Laboratory Theater of Florida

Founded in 2008 by Annette Trossbach, Nicole Rizley and Louise Wigglesworth, the Laboratory Theater of Florida has become a professional teaching theatre known for bold plays, educational programs and community partnerships.

1634 Woodford Ave., Fort Myers
239-218-0481 | laboratorytheaterflorida.com

Lee County Civic Center Complex

A versatile complex that hosts the Southwest Florida Ag Expo, formerly the Southwest Florida & Lee County Fair. Facilities include an arena, exhibition halls and outdoor areas for concerts, trade shows, fairs, festivals and community events.

11831 Bayshore Road, North Fort Myers
239-533-1168 | leegov.com/parks/centers/civiccenter

Melody Lane Performing Arts Center

A Cape Coral training hub for young performers with year-round classes in dance, theater and voice. Student productions, showcases and competition teams build stage experience for families close to home.

75 Mid Cape Terrace, #1, Cape Coral
239-220-9527 | melodylanepac.com

Music & Arts Community Center

Located at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fort Myers, the center serves as a performance venue and the administrative home of the Gulf Coast Symphony, which brings concerts and educational programs to Lee County.

13411 Shire Lane, Fort Myers
239-277-1700 | gulfcoastsymphony.org/macc

Players Circle Theater

A professional black-box space founded by Carrie Lund Cacioppo and Robert Cacioppo, offering Broadway-level entertainment. Their decades of local leadership include launching the region's first professional theatre and the nationally regarded Florida Repertory Theatre.

13211 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers
239-800-3292 | playerscircle.org

The Ranch Concert Hall & Saloon

A nightclub and live music venue with a 25,000-sq-ft Western saloon, more than 400 feet of bar, a custom 1,800-sq. ft. stage and a 4,500-sq. ft. dance floor open Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

2158 Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers
239-985-9839 | theranchfortmyers.com

Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center

In a restored U.S. Post Office, the center hosts exhibitions, concerts, films and educational programs. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights, Sidney's Rooftop offers 360-degree views, drinks and dancing at sunset over the Caloosahatchee.

2301 First St., Fort Myers
239-333-1933 | sbdac.com

Southwest Florida Symphony

Masterworks programs span the Baroque through today, accompanied by pre-concert lectures. The season features Pops, Tiny Concerts chamber programs, and a Youth Orchestra.

7500 College Parkway, Suite 200, Fort Myers
239-418-1500 | swfiso.org

Southwest Florida Symphony Youth Orchestra

Training ensembles for student musicians provide an orchestral experience under the guidance of professionals. Seasonal concerts, section coaching and auditions prepare players for advanced ensembles and public performances.

7500 College Parkway, Suite 200, Fort Myers
239-418-1500 | swfiso.org

Southwest Florida Theatre Company

Accompanied by the Gulf Coast Symphony, this resident professional company presents Broadway-style musicals and plays at the Music & Arts Community Center. Productions combine live orchestration, regional and visiting talent and full theatrical staging.

13411 Shire Lane, Fort Myers
239-277-1700 | gulfcoastsymphony.org/southwest-florida-theatre-company

Tribby Arts Center

At Shell Point, this 44,000-sq-ft arts center includes a 400-seat auditorium, three galleries and studios for music and crafts. The campus adds Tribby Café, an outdoor sculpture garden and the Serendipity gift shop.

17281 On Par Blvd., Fort Myers
239-415-5667 | tribbyartscenter.com

COLLIER COUNTY

Artis—Naples

Home to The Baker Museum and the Naples Philharmonic, Artis—Naples presents concerts, visiting dance companies, lectures and Broadway programming throughout the season.

5833 Pelican Bay Blvd., Naples
239-597-1900 | artisnaples.org

Cambier Park Bandshell

An outdoor stage in downtown Naples used for community concerts, civic celebrations and special events.

755 8th Ave. S., Naples
239-213-7120 | naplesgov.com





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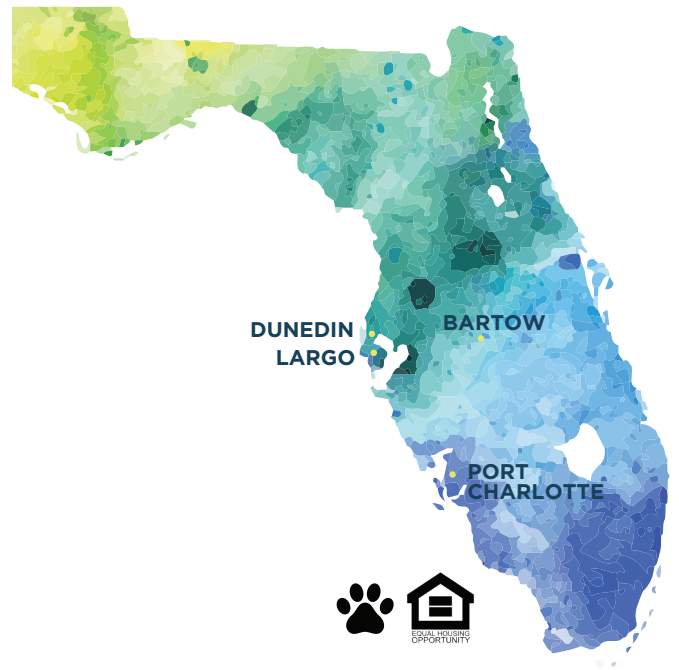
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Gulfshore Playhouse

A professional company producing classic and contemporary plays and education programs for students and adults. Its new Theatre and Education Center has expanded rehearsal, performance and training spaces.

755 8th Ave. S., Naples
239-261-7529 | gulfshoreplayhouse.org

Marco Island Center for the Arts

A community hub offering exhibitions, classes and performances on Marco Island with seasonal programming for residents and visitors.

1010 Winterberry Drive, Marco Island
239-394-4221 | marcoislandart.org

Naples Art Institute

At Cambier Park, the Institute presents rotating exhibitions, festivals and classes for all ages.

585 Park St., Naples
239-262-6517 | naplesart.org

Naples Performing Arts Center

Training for young performers in theater, dance and voice with student productions and recitals throughout the year.

1048 Castello Drive, Naples
239-597-6722 | npacfl.com

Naples Philharmonic Youth Orchestra

Artis—Naples' advanced youth ensemble trains dedicated student musicians through rehearsals, coaching and public performances. The program develops orchestral skills while connecting players to the broader Naples Philharmonic community.

5833 Pelican Bay Blvd., Naples
239-597-1900 | artisnaples.org/education/student/youth-orchestra

The Naples Players

A long-standing community theater presenting a full season of plays, musicals and education programs for all ages at the Sugden Community Theatre.

701 5th Ave. S., Naples
239-434-7340 | naplesplayers.org

Norris Community Center

Multi-use venue with a black-box theater, meeting rooms and event spaces used

by local groups for performances and gatherings.

755 8th Ave. S., Naples
239-213-3058 | naplesgov.com

Opera Naples

The resident opera company produces mainstage titles, concerts and education programs from its Wang Opera Center. Guest artists, local talent and community initiatives keep grand opera present in Collier year-round.

Wang Opera Center, 2408 Linwood Ave., Naples
239-963-9050 | operanaples.org

Seminole Casino Hotel Immokalee

A regional entertainment destination hosting touring concerts and comedy in addition to gaming, dining and events.

506 S. 1st St., Immokalee
800-218-0007 | seminoleimmokaleecasino.com

TheatreZone

A professional company producing musicals and concerts with Broadway and regional talent at the G&L Theatre on the Community School of Naples campus.

13275 Livingston Road, Naples
888-966-3352 | theatre.zone

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center

A 44,000-sq-ft waterfront facility with flexible spaces for concerts, plays and community events, on-site catering and ample parking.

75 Taylor St., Punta Gorda
941-833-5444 | charlotteharborecc.com

Charlotte Performing Arts Center

A state-of-the-art facility on the Charlotte



PUNTA GORDA/ENGLEWOOD BEACH VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

High School campus used for school productions, community theater, concerts and touring shows.

701 Carmalita St., Punta Gorda
941-505-7469 | yourcharlotteschools.net/cpac

Charlotte Players

A community theatre presenting plays, musicals and special events since 1961, with education programs including acting classes and the Kids Onstage program.

1182 Market Circle, Port Charlotte
941-255-1022 | charlotteplayers.org

Englewood Art Center (Ringling College)

A branch of Ringling College offering exhibitions, classes and studio access with galleries, ceramics and digital media spaces and a lending library.

350 S. McCall Road, Englewood
941-474-5548 | ringling.edu/eac

Gulf Theater at the Military Heritage Museum

A 247-seat venue inside the Military Heritage Museum presenting lectures, concerts and theatrical events with modern audiovisual support.

900 W. Marion Ave., Punta Gorda
941-205-8545 | gulftheater.org

Lemon Bay Playhouse

Community theatre staging dramas, comedies and musicals since 1987 with opportunities for local volunteers on and off stage.

96 W. Dearborn St., Englewood
941-475-6756 | lemonbayplayhouse.com

Punta Gorda Symphony

Formerly known as the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, this professional ensemble presents a season of orchestral repertoire featuring guest artists and educational programs.

Administrative Office: 6210 Scott St.,
Unit 213, Punta Gorda
941-205-5996 | pgsymphony.org

Visual Arts Center

A community arts facility with galleries, studios and classes serving greater Punta Gorda with exhibitions and events.

210 Maud St., Punta Gorda
941-639-8810 | visualartcenter.org

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ARTFUL SIDE

CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION THRIVE IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S VIBRANT LOCAL ART CULTURE

Alliance for the Arts

A cornerstone of the Fort Myers arts community since the 1970s, the Alliance for the Arts continues to transform lives through education, exhibitions and performance. The campus remains a hub for local artists, theatre productions and seasonal art camps designed to inspire young creators.

The Alliance for the Arts 2025-2026 season includes the Youth Theatre productions of "Dreamland," "Something Rotten Jr.," "The Outsiders" and the Americana Community Music Association (ACMA) Concert Series, including performances by Brain Smalley and Roy Book Binder in early 2026. The Pop-Up Auction House runs through the end of Nov. 2025, with art displayed at the Alliance from January to February 2026. Film screenings of "Reel



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Families" and "Michael's Monthly Mystery Movie" run throughout the year. The Alliance offers various educational opportunities.

This winter's lineup includes the thought-provoking production of "Marian, Or the True Tale of Robin Hood," a clever gender-bending retelling of the classic legend that runs from Dec. 6 through 8.

Bluegrass lovers will enjoy the Flatlanders on Jan. 12, while the Youth Theatre takes audiences under the sea with Disney Pixar's "Finding Nemo KIDS" on Feb. 1 and 2. In March, the ACMA Concert Series presents The Honey Badgers and Fred Ball, and on April 25, Chase Padgett's one-man show "Guitars" returns.

10091 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers
239-939-2787 | artinlee.org

Artis—Naples / The Baker Museum

Artis—Naples anchors Southwest Florida's arts scene with exhibitions and performances that blend sophistication and accessibility. The 2025-2026 season, "America 250: E Pluribus Unum — Out of Many, One," promises to entertain,



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ARTFUL SIDE

provoke and provide patrons a season full of unforgettable experiences — from Beethoven to Broadway, de Lempicka to Dolly Parton and Mahler's grand symphony to the serene power of Ansel Adams' landscapes.

Highlights of the season include "Florida Contemporary" (Oct. 18, 2025 – June 28, 2026), featuring works by Mally Khorasanchi, Boy Kong, Jillian Mayer and Reginald O'Neal and Tamara de Lempicka (Oct. 25, 2025 – Feb. 8, 2026), with a sweeping Art Deco retrospective. The season includes a compelling visual exploration of local environmental chal-

lenges entitled "Entangled in the Mangroves" featuring nine Florida-based artists and a sweeping presentation of Ansel Adams' photography. A panel discussion for "Florida Contemporary" takes place on Jan. 29, 2026. Dance lovers will enjoy Alonzo King LINES Ballet performing with the Naples Philharmonic on Nov. 16, 2025.

Led by Sharon and Timothy Ubben Artistic and Music Director Alexander Shelley, Naples Philharmonic returns with powerful momentum.

"The first concert of the Masterworks season is going to be Mahler's 'Resurrection Symphony.' That's a really extraordinary piece that speaks to the ideas of rebirth and Renewal — and frankly, of society and the role of people within it," said Filner.

Additional season highlights include Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" and Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony. One of the most anticipated performances of the lineup is "The Elements," a violin concerto conceived and performed by renowned classical musician Joshua

Bell and co-composed by five top American composers.

Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly leads four of the five signature Pops series programs with five programs, and Artis—Naples welcomes guest conductor Stuart Chafetz to lead one of the compelling programs of the season. The lineup celebrates musical icons, including, among others, Elvis Presley (performed by Frankie Moreno), Paul Simon and Dolly Parton. Broadway star Mandy Gonzalez presents a showcase of musical theater classics and Troupe Vertigo returns with "Mysterioso," a symphony featuring circus acrobatics and special effects. The season finale is "Threads: My Songs in Symphony," created by Dolly Parton.

5833 Pelican Bay Blvd., Naples
239-597-1900 | artisnaples.org



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Arts Bonita |

Arts Bonita Performing Arts

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brant mix of concerts, theater, and exhibitions for all ages. This season features live performances such as “Love Letters” on Feb. 14 and the return of Gulfshore Opera’s “Rusalka” on Mar. 25, 2026. Workshops and art classes in ceramics, painting, glass and dance run year-round for adults and youth.

At the visual arts campus, “Beyond the Art Show Tent” by Tammy DeCaro and “Pareidolia” by Jeanette Richards run from Oct. 23 through Dec. 4, 2025. DeCaro’s vibrant collection invites observers to view art as a living part of daily life, and each piece becomes a meaningful expression of creativity and connection. In “Pareidolia,” Richards explores the human tendency to find meaning in shapes and patterns.

January through March, Arts Bonita welcomes hundreds of nationally and internationally known artists to Riverside Park in Bonita Springs during the Bonita Springs National Art Festivals.

Arts Bonita Performing Arts provides classes in drama, dance, film, digital arts and more for artists and hobbyists of all ages. The theatre offers an exciting range of live performances, including concerts, theater, improv, comedy, film screenings, lectures and multicultural events almost every night of the week.

Performing Arts Center, 10150 Bonita Beach Road
Visual Arts Center, 26100 Old 41 Road
239-495-8989 | artcenterbonita.org

BIG ARTS

BIG ARTS on Sanibel Island offers a vibrant array of opportunities to enjoy the performing and fine arts, including films, workshops, classes and community events. The organization continues its commitment to showcasing local and national talent with exhibitions that celebrate diversity and imagination. Nov. 1 – Dec. 15, 2025, the gallery hosts “Curious,” an exhibition by artist Reynier Llanes with an artist reception on Nov. 7, 2025, followed by an “Ode to Joy” exhibition presented by the Sanibel-Captiva Art League. Additional winter and spring programming includes solo and group shows featuring regional and visiting artists. Visitors can enjoy award-winning films in a state-of-the-art theater.

900 Dunlop Rd., Sanibel
239-395-0900 | bigarts.org

Marco Island Center for the Arts

Marco Island Center for the Arts continues its tradition of bringing diverse creative experiences to the island. The fourth season at Marco Island Arts Center Theatre kicks off Nov. 6 through 23, 2025, with “Baggage” by Sam Bobrick. In December, Arts Center Theatre offers “Selections from Holidays on Ice” by David Sedaris and “Singing and Swingin’ – The Holiday Songbook.” Jan. 8 through 25, 2026, the center presents “Four Old Breads: Miss Magnolia Senior Citizen Beauty Pageant” by Leslie Kimbell. Following that in February is a production of “Moonlight and Magnolias” by Ron Hutchinson in February, “California Suite” by Neil Simon in March and “You’ve Got Hate Mail” by Billy Van Zandt and Jane Milmore in April. The center offers youth and adult art classes, including painting, watercolor, acrylic, oil, drawing, multimedia and sculpting — and they’re always adding more.

1010 Winterberry Dr., Marco Island
239-394-4221 | marcoislandart.org

Naples Art District (NAD)

The Naples Art District is a hub for working artists, galleries and studios in the heart of Naples. Located just off Pine Ridge Road, the district has grown steadily to include over 100 member artists whose studios and galleries are concentrated in that area. Recognized as a Cultural Arts District by Collier County, the district attracts tourists and locals with its array of working studios and galleries, art for sale, events and classes.

2180 J and C Blvd, Naples,
239-249-1977 | naplesartdistrict.com

Naples Art Institute

For 70 years, Naples Art Institute has provided a welcoming space for both established and aspiring artists to explore their creativity. Exhibitions of local and international art draw thousands of visitors annually. The arts organization encourages residents to experiment in the visual arts through a variety of classes, workshops, lectures, special programs and events. Naples Art Institute’s 2025–2026 exhibition lineup features “Joan Miró: Fire in the Soul” (Dec. 13, 2025 – Mar. 29, 2026) and “An Adventure in the

Arts: The Guild Hall Collection” (through Jan. 2, 2026). The 30th Annual New Year’s Art Fair returns Jan. 4 – 5, 2026, followed by the 47th Annual National Art Fair (Feb. 21 – 23, 2026) and the Downtown Art Fair (Mar. 22 – 23, 2026).

585 Park St., Naples
239-262-6517 | naplesart.org

Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center (SBDAC) / Florida Arts, Inc.

In the heart of downtown Fort Myers, the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center continues to redefine community engagement through art, music and design.

The Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center, run by Florida Arts, Inc., is dedicated to bringing world-class art events to the Southwest Florida community. Throughout the year, the center hosts concerts, art exhibitions, galas, lectures, and educational arts experiences for children and adults. Its galleries rotate monthly, with seasonal highlights including “Beyond the Brush” (Nov. 7–25, 2025) and “Edge of Couture: The Art of Fashion” (Apr. 24, 2026).

2301 First St., Fort Myers
239-333-1933 | sbdac.com

Visual Art Center

Visual Art Center offers art classes, instructors and juried exhibit opportunities for members and visitors of all ages and skill levels. Social arts events throughout the year provide additional creative ways for community members to become part of Charlotte County’s vibrant cultural scene. Highlights of the 2025–2026 season include “Dreamings – The Art of Aboriginal Australia” (Feb. 7 – Apr. 4, 2026) and the “Fiber Arts Studio Series” on Apr. 25, 2026.

210 Maud St., Punta Gorda
941-639-8810 | visualartcenter.org



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701 Aquí Esta Drive
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941-575-1701
ButtonwoodVillage.com



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239-489-1221 | belltowerfl.com

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23106 Fashion Drive, Estero
239-992-4259 | simon.com/mall/coconut-point

Edison Mall

The region's original indoor mall, which celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2025.

4125 Cleveland Avenue, Fort Myers
239-939-1933 | shoppedisonmall.com

Gulf Coast Town Center

Features Bass Pro Shops, Belk, Best Buy, Costco, Dick's Sporting Goods, Target, and a variety of dining options.

9903 Gulf Coast Main Street, Fort Myers
239-267-5107 | gulfcoasttowncenter.com

Miromar Outlets

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10801 Corkscrew Road, Estero
239-948-3766 | miromaroutlets.com

Periwinkle Place

Recently reopened following renovations after Hurricane Ian. Stores include Chico's, Sanibel Day Spa and Tiki Tim's.

2075 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel
239-395-1914 | periwinkleplace.com

Promenade at Bonita Bay

Features home decor and great gifts, salons, restaurants, a gourmet market and a Saturday farmer's market.

26811 South Bay Drive, Bonita Springs
239-949-1573 | promenadeshops.com

The Forum

Major retail stores and everyday services make The Forum a convenient stop for

travelers and everyday errands.

9350 Dynasty Drive, Fort Myers
inventrustproperties.com/property/the-forum-fort-myers/

Fleamasters Flea Market

A multi-vendor market with hundreds of booths, food stands and frequent special events.

4135 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Fort Myers
239-334-7001 | fleamastersfleamarket.com

COLLIER COUNTY

Coastland Center

An indoor mall in Naples anchored by Macy's, JCPenney and Dillard's. In all, there are more than 130 places to shop and dine.

1900 Tamiami Trail N., Naples
239-262-2323 | coastlandcenter.com

Mercato

Upscale retailers, restaurants and luxury condominiums in an outdoor hub with live music, festivals and fairs, most of which are free.

9132 Strada Place, North Naples
239-254-1080 | mercatoshops.com

Fifth Avenue South

A timeless blend of glamour and laid-back ease for shopping, dining and entertainment.

Fifth Avenue South, Naples
239-692-8436 | fifthavenuesouth.com

Third Street South

Numerous shopping and dining options, set amidst courtyards, antique European fountains and vibrant, cascading flowers.

Concierge kiosk at Camargo Park (opposite Fleischmann Fountain)
239-434-6533 | thirdstreetsouth.com

The Village on Venetian Bay

Set on the waterfront of Venetian Bay, with almost 50 shops and restaurants.

4200 Gulf Shore Boulevard North, Naples
239-261-6100 | venetianvillage.com

Waterside Shops

Luxury brand retailers and elegant dining options. The center features over 60 stores including Saks Fifth Avenue,



Coconut Point, Estero

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5415 Tamiami Trail N., Naples
239-598-1605 | watersideshops.com

Tin City Waterfront Shops

Tin City features local boutiques, casual dining and sightseeing cruises right on the Gordon River.

1200 5th Ave. S., Naples
239-262-4200 | tincityofnaples.com

Galleria Shoppes at Vanderbilt

This open-air shopping plaza features restaurants, boutiques, salons, and a busy weekend farmer's market.

2343 Vanderbilt Beach Road, Naples
239-594-5000 | shopvanderbilt.com

Marco Walk Plaza

A popular shopping and dining area near the beach hotels, Marco Walk Plaza features restaurants, boutiques and services.

599 S. Collier Blvd., Marco Island
954-232.5831 | marcowalkplaza.com

Esplanade Shoppes at Marco Island

This coastal waterfront village offers shoppers an array of boutiques, galleries and dining.

760 N. Collier Blvd., Marco Island
703-772-0008 | esplanadeshoppesatmarcoisland.com

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Port Charlotte Town Center

Features a mix of over 60 retailers, including Dillard's, JCPenney, and Regal Cinemas.

1441 Tamiami Trail, Port Charlotte
941-624-4833 | portcharlottetowncenter.com

Fishermen's Village

Features shopping, dining, a marina, resort suites and special events.

1200 W. Retta Esplanade, Punta Gorda
800-639-0020 | fishermenstvillage.com



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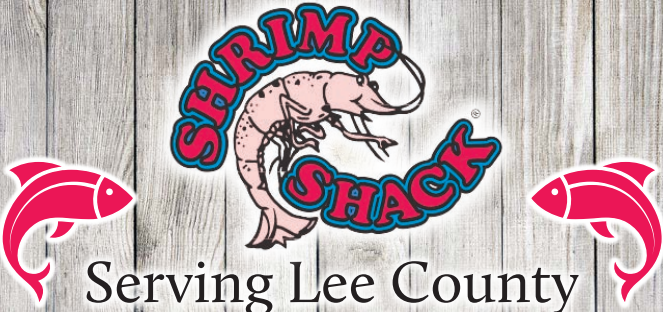
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2136 Bay St, Fort Myers
239-940-8744 | baystreetyard.com

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8250 Nalle Grade Rd., Fort Myers
239-385-0415 | blossomandbrie.com

The Bohemian

Owners Brandon and Caitlin Schewe, proprietors of Downtown Coffee Company and The Canary Club, bring a unique small-plate concept to downtown Bonita. With craft cocktails and menu items that rotate seasonally, the swanky vibe is a refreshing addition to the local dining scene.

27975 Old 41 Rd., Bonita Springs
239-451-9619 | bohemian.restaurant

The Bubble Room

The Bubble Room reopened in July 2025, following renovations necessitated by damage from Hurricane Ian. Established in 1979, Captiva's most whimsical restaurant is as well known for its kitschy décor as for its oversized servings and nostalgic atmosphere.

15001 Captiva Dr., Captiva
239-472-5558 | bubbleroomcaptiva.com

Bruno's of Brooklyn

A lively, family-run spot serving old-world Italian flavors with a modern twist, offering dishes that honor tradition while exploring bold, unforgettable tastes.

2149 First St., Fort Myers
239-278-0211 | brunosofbrooklyn.com

Canary Club Pizza & Cocktails

Mingling Mediterranean and Middle Eastern influences with local flair, the Ca-

nary Club features a wood-fired oven and creative sourdough pizzas. Outdoor seating, brightly colored walls and an inventive menu attract foodies from all over the area.

10610 Founders Way, Ste 140, Bonita Springs
239-776-8065 | canaryclubbonita.com

Cielo

A piano bar adds a touch of elegance to the polished service and fresh, seasonal menu. Cielo offers the perfect backdrop for celebrations or relaxed dining.

1244 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel
239-472-5555 | cielo-sanibel.com

Deep Lagoon Seafood & Oyster House

**Additional locations in Naples*

Deep Lagoon is owned by the Phelan Family Brands, a Bonita Springs-based company that also operates Pinchers Crab Shack restaurants and Texas Tony's Rib & Brewhouse. Patrons can enjoy a variety of fresh local seafood dishes inside or on the patio.

14040 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers
239-689-5474 | deeplagoon.com

Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille (Multiple Locations)

Named for Randy Wayne White's beloved literary character, this popular waterfront restaurant has multiple locations and offers Caribbean-inspired seafood in a laid-back atmosphere.

708 Fisherman's Wharf, Fort Myers Beach
239-765-9660 | docfords.com
2500 Island Inn Rd, Sanibel
239-472-8311 | docfords.com

Fancy's Southern Café (Multiple Locations)

Fancy's exudes warm hospitality and southern flavors in an upscale atmosphere. Owner Matthew Creach opened the first location in 2012, and the southern charm and elegant atmosphere have made this dining spot a local favorite.

8890 Salrose Ln. #101, Fort Myers
239-561-2988 | fancysoutherncafe.com
2214 Bay St., Fort Myers
239-208-2564 | fancysoutherncafe.com

The Firestone Grill Room

Housed in a historic four-story building, this vibrant spot features a striking two-story dining room serving top-quality prime steaks, fresh seafood and locally sourced produce.

2224 Bay St., Fort Myers, FL 33901
239-334-3473 | firestonefl.com

The Fish House

For those in the mood for laid-back dining with a view of majestic sunsets, this family-friendly (and pet-friendly) favorite specializes in fresh grouper, fried baskets and local seafood. The relaxed atmosphere and friendly service make the Fish House a local favorite.

7225 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach
239-765-6766 | fishhousefortmyersbeach.com

Gramma Dot's Seaside Saloon

Located near the Sanibel Lighthouse, this dockside restaurant has been serving simple and delicious seafood dishes since 1987. After Hurricane Ian, Gramma Dot's operated with only a food truck during renovations but has since reopened and added a full-service bar.

634 N Yachtsman Dr., Sanibel
239-472-8138 | sanibelmarina.com/dining

The Green Flash

Overlooking the bay, The Green Flash offers wide views to accompany its seafood platters. Named for an enigmatic optical phenomenon that makes the sun flash green for a few moments at sunset, the restaurant is as uniquely Florida as its name.

15183 Captiva Dr., Captiva
239-472-3337 | greenflashcaptiva.com

Hana Japanese Steakhouse and Sushi Lounge

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10801 Corkscrew Rd., Estero
239-495-9916 | hanasteakhouse.com

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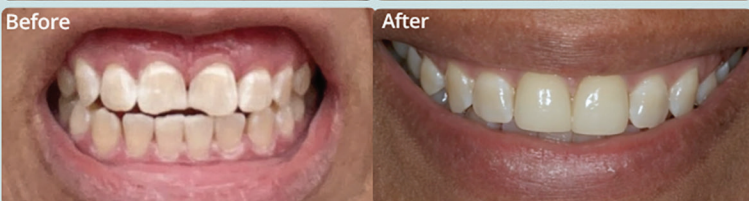
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15250 S Tamiami Trl., Fort Myers
239-849-0622 | haroldsfl.com

Keylime Bistro

This Captiva staple serves up simple seafood dishes and live music on a lively patio — and the key lime pie is worth saving room for.

11509 Andy Rosse Ln., Captiva
239-472-2121 | keylimebistrocaptiva.com

Lobster Lady Seafood Market & Bistro

Both a market and a restaurant, Lobster Lady specializes in seafood. Hearty servings of seafood towers and lobster rolls are among the most popular menu items.

1715 Cape Coral Pkwy. W, Cape Coral
239-471-0136 | lobsterladyseafood.com

McGregor Café

Best known for its filling breakfasts and fresh salads, McGregor Café offers simple, steady dining and neighborhood charm.

4329 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers
239-936-1771 | mcgregorcafe.com

The Mucky Duck

Practically a Captiva institution, The Mucky Duck draws crowds for its sunset views and pub-style dishes. It's the rare kind of place where flip-flops and pints of beer seem just as natural as champagne toasts.

11546 Andy Rosse Ln., Captiva
239-472-3434 | muckyduck.com

MudBugs Cajun Kitchen

Cajun flavors and nightly music create a lighthearted atmosphere at this Sanibel restaurant, where diners enjoy options ranging from gumbo to crawfish as they tap their feet to the music.

1473 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel
239-472-2221 | mudbugssanibel.com

Nice Guys Pizza

A punk soundtrack gives this restaurant an edgy and playful vibe. This pizzeria pairs craft pies with cocktails, attracting a fiercely loyal following.

1404 Cape Coral Pkwy. E, Cape Coral
239-549-7542 | niceguyspizza.com

Oise Ristorante

Experience an inventive blend of Italian tradition and Japanese artistry by award-winning Chef Brad Kilgore. The menu celebrates bold flavors, seasonal ingredients, and shareable plates.

2262 First St., Fort Myers, FL 33901
239-445-0080 | oiseristorante.com

Point 57 Kitchen & Cocktails

Point 57 specializes in craft cocktails and polished comfort food. Southern-inspired main dishes anchor the menu, and food enthusiasts appreciate both the cuisine and the restaurant's understated elegance.

3522 Del Prado Blvd. S, Cape Coral
239-471-7785 | point57.com

Prawnbroker Restaurant & Fish Market

A Fort Myers landmark for decades, Prawnbroker has a reputation for quality seafood and steady service. It seems to feel both polished and familiar, a combination that has garnered a loyal following.

13451 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers
239-489-2226 | prawnbroker.com

Slipaway Food Truck Park & Marina

People gather around food trucks serving tacos, burgers and seafood as boats slip through the water at the adjacent marina. This hidden gem is becoming an increasingly popular Cape Coral hangout.

1811 Cape Coral Pkwy. E, Cape Coral
239-360-8883 | slipawaycapecoral.com

Survey Café

Housed in a historic cottage in the heart of Old Bonita Springs, Survey Café blends Southern staples with small-town charm. The garden patio fills quickly, especially at breakfast, and during season from January through April, the Café offers a special dinner menu of French cuisine on Friday and Saturday evenings.

10530 Wilson St., Bonita Springs
239-992-2233 | surveycafe.com

Tarpon Lodge Restaurant

History and hospitality converge at this bayfront Pine Island lodge. The menu fea-

tures fresh seafood, and the water view is spectacular.

13771 Waterfront Dr., Bokeelia
239-283-3999 | tarponlodge.com

Traders Restaurant

Island-inspired plates and a bustling bar give Traders its energy. It's casual enough for a family meal and fancy enough to make it a night out.

1551 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel
239-472-7242 | traderssanibel.com

The Veranda

Housed in two century-old homes, The Veranda exemplifies Southern grace and refined dining. With an elegant courtyard garden and careful service, it has become one of downtown Fort Myers' most distinctive dining experiences.

2122 Second St., Fort Myers
239-332-2065 | verandarestaurant.com

Woody's Waterside Island Bar & Grill

This Pine Island bar and grill offers baskets of seafood, outdoor seating and live music most nights of the week. Diners arrive by boat or car to enjoy the casual environment and entertainment.

3051 Stringfellow Rd., St. James City
239-283-5555 | woodyswaterside.com

COLLIER COUNTY

The Bay House

The Bay House Restaurant combines waterfront dining and breathtaking views of the Cocohatchee wildlife preserve. The menu includes seafood and southern-inspired favorites. Diners can eat outside on the waterfront deck and around a fire pit on the front patio.

799 Walkerbilt Rd., Naples
239-591-3837 | bayousenaples.com

Bha! Bha! Persian Bistro

Sophisticated Persian cuisine is layered with spices and flavor that match the chic décor and red walls of this exotic Naples original.

865 5th Ave. S, Naples
239-594-5557 | bhabhapersianbistro.com

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Roy's Restaurant
Reservations at roysrestaurant.com

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Nathan R. Landefeld, MD
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Deborah Miller, MD
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Internal Medicine



Jon Burdzy, DO
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Joanna Carloba, MD
Family Medicine



Ashley Clark, MD
Family Medicine



James Curry, DO
Family Medicine



Amanda Danley, MD
Family Medicine



Lincoln De La Parte, MD
Internal Medicine



Mardelle DeLight, MD
Family Medicine



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Family Medicine



Syed Sher, DO
Family Medicine



Anna Shuster, DO
Family Medicine



Waryllyn Sosa, MD
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Jerry Thomas, MD
Family Medicine



Dean Traiger, MD
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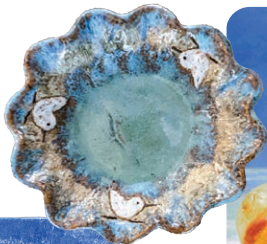
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LOCAL FLAVOR

Bicyclette Cookshop

At Bicyclette Cookshop, chef Kayla Pfeiffer relies on years of experience and creativity to infuse familiar dishes with unexpected flavors. The seasonal menu draws inspiration from global cuisine and local ingredients, providing an evolving culinary canvas to showcase Chef Kayla's imagination.

819 12th Ave. S, Naples
239-316-2424
bicyclettecookshop.com

Celebration Park (Food Truck Court)

This waterfront food truck park boasts a wide array of options ranging from tacos, barbecue, seafood and global street fare. Visitors dine under string lights at communal picnic tables or enjoy drinks from the central bar.

2880 Becca Ave., Naples
239-249-2922 |
celebrationparknaples.com

Campiello Ristorante & Bar

Wood-fired pizzas and modern Italian dishes keep foodies coming back to this inviting local favorite. Seating is available in the busy courtyard or the indoor dining room.

1177 Third St. S, Naples
239-435-1166 | campiello.damico.com

The Dock at Crayton Cove

For decades, The Dock has been serving Caribbean-inspired meals to hungry Neapolitans. Diners sip cocktails and watch the sunset from the outdoor seating area overlooking the bay.

845 12th Ave. S, Naples
239-263-9940 | dockcraytoncove.com

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LOCAL FLAVOR

Doreen's Cup of Joe (Marco Island)

Oversized pancakes, fresh coffee and a full breakfast menu make the first meal of the day into a decadent indulgence. Both locals and island visitors enjoy the friendly service and delightful meals.

267 N Collier Blvd., Marco Island
239-394-2600 | doreenscupofjoe.com

Everglades City Seafood Depot (Everglades City)

Known simply as "The Depot," to locals, this Old Florida classic serves fried seafood, oyster platters and seasonal stone crab with rustic charm, giving the restaurant a timeless quality that reflects the heart of Everglades City.

102 Copeland Ave. N, Everglades City
239-695-0071

Everglades Rod & Gun Club

Originally built as a home in 1864 and transformed in 1922 by Barron Collier into a private club for famous guests, Everglades Rod & Gun Club was restored

in 1973, and remains a rustic lodging and dining destination today. The restaurant serves fried seafood, hushpuppies and stone crab, in season.

200 W. Broadway, Everglades City
239-695-2101 | rodandguneverglades.com

Harold's Place

Harold's Place has been a poolside Naples hangout for decades. Locals enjoy the burgers and shrimp baskets, grab a cold beer and enjoy some live music.

2555 Tamiami Trl. N, Naples
239-263-7254 | haroldsnaples.com

Havana Cafe of the Everglades (Chokoloskee)

Known for breakfast, Cuban sandwiches and café con leche, Havana Café of the Everglades brings a hint of island rhythm to Chokoloskee.

191 Smallwood Dr., Chokoloskee
239-695-2214 | thehavanacafe.com

Jane's Cafe on 3rd

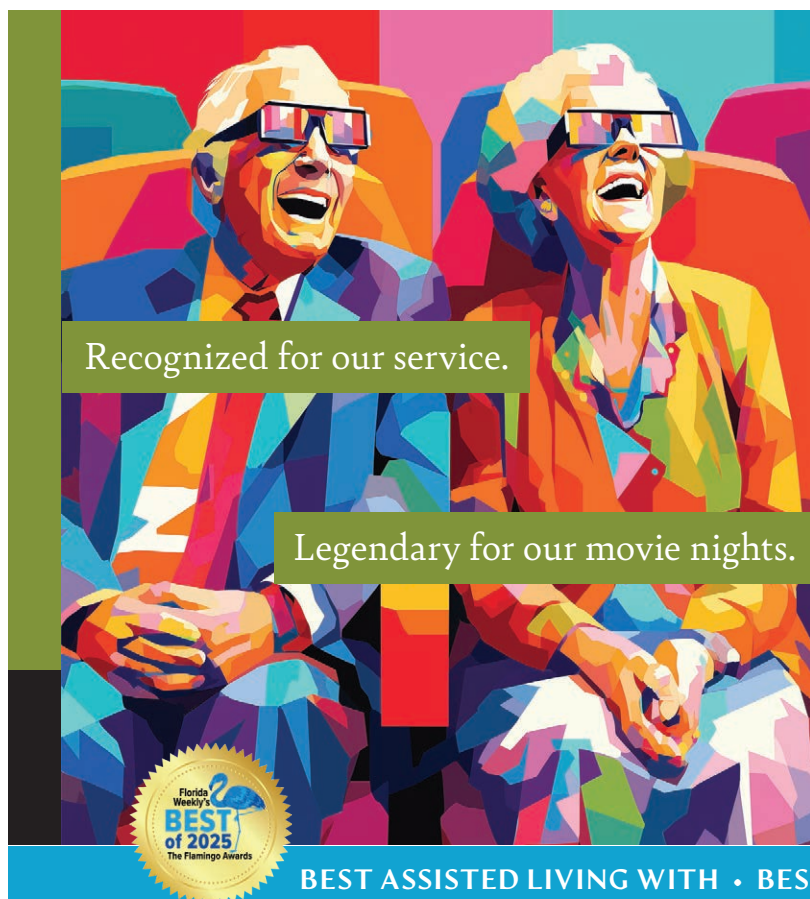
Mornings find diners seated among the shaded gardens on the patio at Jane's Café on 3rd. Fresh breakfast and brunch items draw patrons looking for the quiet atmosphere of daybreak in Old Naples.

1209 3rd St. S, Naples
239-261-2253 | janesnaples.com

Jimmy P's Charred (Naples and Bonita Springs Locations)

Known for its wagyu and prime beef, Jimmy P's Charred offers an upscale steakhouse experience built on a family legacy that made its butcher shop a Naples favorite. The restaurant serves up premium wagyu and prime beef, classic sides and craft cocktails. Good service and great steaks keep diners coming back for more.

1833 Tamiami Trl. N, Naples
239-643-2427 | jimmyscharred.com
25301 S. Tamiami Trl., Ste. 2, Bonita Springs
239-390-0301 | jimmyscharred.com



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The Keyes Company

The Keyes to Success: A Candid Conversation with Shane Spring

NATURE OF BUSINESS:

Full Service Real Estate Brokerage

COMPANY PRESIDENT & CEO:

Christina Pappas and Mike Pappas

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:

350 employees and
3,000 sales agents

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS: 50

YEARS IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Founded in 1926

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 99

What were the best decisions that made your business succeed in the last year?

One of the best decisions I made in my real estate career last year was to get back to the basics. I stopped over complicating things and refocused on the core habits that built my success in the first place—consistent prospecting, truly listening to my clients, nurturing relationships, and staying disciplined with follow-up. By simplifying and returning to these fundamentals, I found not only more business, but also more joy and clarity in my work.

What customer feedback has positively influenced or improved your business in 2025?

One of the most memorable transactions I had this year was working with a client from start to finish—navigating inspections, coordinating repairs, and even helping after closing. It was incredibly rewarding to see them settled in their new home. At the same time, I also received some constructive feedback about a few minor issues that arose during the process. While no one likes to hear criticism, it gave me the chance to reflect, learn, and refine my approach so I can provide an even better experience for my future clients. Every deal is a chance to grow, and this one reminded



COURTESY PHOTO

Shane Spring is an Assistant District Sales Manager at The Keyes Company.

me that success is built on both our wins and our lessons.

Can you share an example of a challenge your business faced this year and how you overcame it?

Over the past year, our market has faced its share of challenges—from rising insurance costs and interest rates to the uncertainty brought by hurricanes. Yet, we met each obstacle with resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to keeping our message positive. By focusing on solutions instead of setbacks, we not only weathered the storms but strengthened the trust and relationships that make this business so rewarding.

How are you using new technology to help your business grow?

One of the best decisions I made last year was to get back to the basics—focusing on the fundamentals that have always built success in real estate: consistent prospecting, truly listening to clients, nurturing

relationships, and staying disciplined with follow-up. At the same time, I've embraced AI and new technology to enhance those core skills—using it to create targeted marketing campaigns, write compelling property descriptions, analyze market data, and streamline communication. By pairing timeless principles with cutting-edge tools, I've been able to work smarter, connect deeper, and deliver a smoother, more personalized experience for my clients.

In what ways have you engaged with the local community this year?

This past year, I've stayed deeply engaged in our Southwest Florida community—not only through my work in real estate, but by giving my time, resources, and heart to causes that matter. I've been proud to support organizations like Community Cooperative, Pace Center for Girls, Special Equestrians, the Children's Advocacy Center, and many other local charities making a real difference. I've also stayed involved in our local political landscape, advocating for policies and initiatives that strengthen our neighborhoods, protect our way of life, and ensure a thriving future for our region. Community is at the core of everything I do, and I believe that giving back is just as important as doing business.

How have you used social media and digital marketing to boost your business in 2025?

Social media has become one of the most powerful tools in both my real estate business and my community involvement. I use it to showcase listings with high-quality photos, videos, and virtual tours, share market insights, and highlight success stories that help educate and inspire buyers and sellers. It's also a platform for connection—I regularly post updates about local events, charitable initiatives, and the organizations I support, such as Community Cooperative, Pace Center for Girls, and the Children's Advocacy Center. By blending business and community content, I'm able to not only market properties but also build trust, foster relationships, and keep our Southwest Florida community informed, engaged, and connected.

What are you doing to keep employees pleased and how has that helped your business's success?

Retention in the real estate industry is never easy, but we achieve it by equipping our agents with top-of-the-class products, cutting-edge tools, and exceptional support. Our focus is on creating an environment where agents have everything they need to succeed—from innovative technology and training to personalized guidance and a culture that celebrates their wins. When our agents thrive, our entire organization thrives.

Looking ahead, what are your top three priorities for ensuring continued growth and success in the next year?

My three priorities in real estate to retain and build my clientele are simple but powerful: exceptional service, consistent communication, and lasting relationships. I strive to deliver an outstanding experience at every stage of the transaction, keep my clients informed with honesty and clarity, and stay connected long after the closing. By focusing on these fundamentals, I not only earn repeat business but also build a network of trusted referrals that fuels long-term success.

What makes your business stand out from your competitors?

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As we approach our 100th year, The Keyes Company stands proud as a beacon of trust, innovation, and enduring relationships in the real estate industry. For a century, we've dedicated ourselves to providing exceptional service, adapting to changing times, and embracing cutting-edge technology to serve our clients better.

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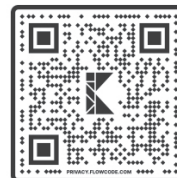
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LOCAL FLAVOR

Lee Be Fish (Marco Island)

This humble fish market is one of Marco Island's best-kept secrets. The fresh catch of the day goes directly from the boat to the plate, and the fish tacos are a local favorite.

350 Royal Palm Dr., Marco Island
239-389-0580 | leebefish.com

The Little Bar (Goodland)

Like Goodland, The Little Bar is an eclectic combination of influences and personality. Partially a roadhouse that features live bands and partially a seafood shack that serves up seafood baskets, it's been a staple of Goodland nightlife for years.

205 Harbor Pl. N, Goodland
239-394-5663 | littlebarrestaurant.com

Osteria Tulia

Rustic Italy meets Naples' sophistication at Osteria where handmade pastas, wood-roasted meats and craft cocktails entertain patrons into the night.

466 5th Ave. S, Naples
239-213-2073 | osteriatulia.com

The Oyster House (Goodland)

Established in the 1950s, The Oyster House fits right in with Goodland's laid-back personality. Seafood platters and live music draw patrons to this waterfront relic of Old Florida.

606 Palm Point Dr., Goodland
239-394-2123

The Oyster Society (Marco Island)

The Art Deco decor and excellent service provide an upscale dining experience at The Oyster Society. Seafood and sushi pair with cocktails to entice refined Marco Island foodies.

599 S Collier Blvd., Marco Island
239-394-3474 | theoystersociety.com

Panevino Ristorante Naples

With a mission to ensure each guest receives prompt, professional, friendly and courteous service, Panevino Ristorante Naples has won the Best of Naples Award for four consecutive years, qualifying the

establishment for the 2021 Business Hall of Fame. At Panevino Ristorante Naples, diners can expect impeccable service and thoughtfully crafted Italian fare in a welcoming environment.

8853 Tamiami Trail N, Naples
239-514-8655 | panevinonaples.com

PJK Neighborhood Chinese Restaurant

A modern Chinese kitchen that blends traditional flavors with a fresh, coastal twist, emphasizing scratch-made sauces, hand-folded dumplings, and locally sourced seafood. Diners gather in a relaxed yet stylish setting to savor family-style sharing plates, creative cocktails and a thoughtfully curated wine list.

835 4th Ave. S, Naples
239-367-0300 | pjkinchinese.com

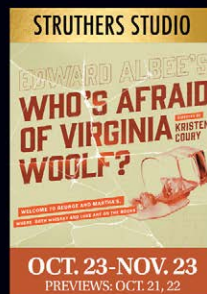
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LOCAL FLAVOR

of patrons to its festive outdoor patio.

3275 Bayshore Dr., Naples
239-732-1188 | realmacawnaples.com

Ridgeway Bar & Grill

A chef-owned, family-oriented restaurant that delivers locally influenced cuisine from scratch, ideal for both everyday meals and special occasions. Its award-winning wine list, featuring more than 600 bottles, reflects a commitment to quality and elegance.

1300 3rd St. S #101, Naples
239-262-5500 | ridgewaybarandgrill.com

Stan's Idle Hour (Goodland)

Stan's, an unpretentious Goodland original, is a place where live music on the outdoor stage, water views and libations turn days into big parties.

221 Goodland Dr. W, Goodland
239-394-3041 | stansidlehour.net

T-Michaels:**Steak & Lobster House**

Situated on Venetian Bay, this polished

restaurant specializes in steak and seafood, offering patrons prime cuts, cold martinis and sunset views.

4050 Gulf Shore Blvd. N, Naples
239-261-0622 | t-michaels.com

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Carmelo's Italian Ristorante

The menu of Sicilian favorites makes this downtown spot feel both festive and intimate. Pastas and nightly specials attract a loyal clientele.

321 W Retta Esplanade, Punta Gorda
941-621-4091 | carmelosristorante.com

Celtic Ray Public House

This authentic Irish pub has been pouring draughts and serving fish and chips since 1997. The restaurant features live music most nights, and the conversation flows as fast as the pints of Guinness.

145 E Marion Ave., Punta Gorda
941-916-9115 | celticray.net

Donato's Italian Restaurant

Generous portions of familiar classics give Donato's Italian Restaurant a sense of old-school charm.

1900 Tamiami Trail, Ste. 17, Port Charlotte
941-764-1600 | donatosportcharlotte.com

FM Don's

With its white tablecloths and polished service, FM Don's is a perfect choice for business dinners and celebrations. Specialties include steaks, seafood and seasonal specials.

201 W Marion Ave., Punta Gorda
941-39-3720 | fmdons.com

Hometown Grill, Port Charlotte

Hometown Grill serves up no-frills breakfasts and lunches. Good service, hot coffee and healthy portions make it a neighborhood favorite.

1931 Tamiami Trl. #10, Port Charlotte
941-629-5898 | thehometowngrill.com

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28000 A-1 Airport Road • Punta Gorda, FL 33982 | www.FlyPGD.com

LOCAL FLAVOR

The Grill at 1951

The Grill at 1951 serves steaks and seafood with white-tablecloth service, as patrons enjoy live jazz music.

1951 Tamiami Trl., Port Charlotte
941-255-0994 | thegrillat1951.com

Laishley Crab House

Overlooking the harbor, the expansive dining area serves seafood towers, sushi and seasonal stone crab as diners watch boats slipping through the calm waters.

150 Laishley Ct., Punta Gorda
941-205-5566 | laishleycrabhouse.com

Peace River Seafood

It may appear to be a simple crab shack, but as locals and guests return time and again to indulge in buckets of blue crab, local shrimp and oysters, this place earns its reputation for having some of the freshest seafood in the area.

5337 Duncan Rd., Punta Gorda
941-505-8440 | peaceriverseafood.com

Perfect Caper

Chef Jeanie Roland brings global technique to local ingredients. With a reputation for excellence that has led to a ranking on national best-of lists, Perfect Caper offers a fine dining experience that lives up to the hype.

121 E Marion Ave., Punta Gorda
941-505-9009 | theperfectcaper.com

Prime Serious Steak

Prime Serious Steak is serious about good food. Generous servings and bold flavors pair well with the upscale service that draws diners for special occasions and mid-week meals.

10361 Tamiami Trl., Punta Gorda
941-347-8156 | primeserioussteak.com

Riviera Bar & Grill

Diners love the laid-back vibes, freshly made dishes, waterfront location with boat-up access, tiki-side cocktails and live music at Riviera Bar & Grill.

5500 Deltona Dr., Punta Gorda

941-639-2633 | rivierabarandgrillpuntagorda.com

TT's Tiki Bar

Located directly on the water, TT's features live music, cold drinks and an authentic island vibe. The kitchen serves standard bar fare, but the sunsets and the stage attract the crowds.

33 Tamiami Trl., Punta Gorda
(941-637-6770 | ttsgp.com

The Twisted Fork

Roadhouse vibes, Southern specialties and a busy stage make this The Twisted Fork a great choice for dinner and live entertainment. Revved-up roadhouse energy—Harley vibes, big Southern flavors and a busy stage make this an easy pick for dinner and a show. It's loud, lively, and proudly local.

2208 El Jobean Rd., Port Charlotte
941-235-3675 | twistedfork.net

There's always something happening at the House!

2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957

Arts & Crafts Fairs



HOLIDAY BONANZA
Arts and Crafts Fair

Nov 15 & 16, Dec 14, Jan 11,
Feb 22, March 22, & April 12

Monthly Community Socials
5 - 8 pm on:

Dec 30, Jan 27, Feb 24,
March 31, & April 28



1ST ANNUAL SCA TENNIS TOURNAMENT
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Dec 6th & 7th 2025



Weekly Happenings:

Monday: Shellcrafters
Class 10 am - 1 pm

Friday: Hearts Club
1 pm - 3 pm



Other Upcoming Programs here at the House:

- Wine Tastings
- Line Dancing
- Culinary Classes
- Art Shows
- Wine Glass Painting
- Health & Wellness Seminars
- Mixed Media Art Classes



Annual Gala

Roaring 20's Theme
January 23rd, 2026



Events | Meetings | Celebrations | Weddings | Classes | Galas | Lectures | Conferences

Our mission is to enrich community spirit through educational, cultural, and social gatherings in our historic Community House.

239-472-2155
www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net

SIGNATURE EVENTS



CHRIS TILLEY PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY PHOTO

LEE COUNTY

American Sand Sculpting Championship

Nov. 20–24, 2025

World-class master and amateur sculptors from all over the country create monumental sand art along Fort Myers Beach. The festivities include music, food vendors and a wealth of family activities.

Fort Myers Beach

239-454-7500 | fmb sandsculpting.com

ArtFest Fort Myers

Feb. 6–8, 2026

For 26 years, more than 200 artists have gathered to showcase their work at this vibrant arts festival on the Fort Myers waterfront that offers live demonstrations, culinary experiences and art activities for the whole family.

Downtown River District, Fort Myers

239-768-3602 | artfestfortmyers.com

Babcock Ranch Showcase Saturdays

Rekurs monthly (seasonal)

This lively festival series features local musicians, food trucks and artisan vendors at Founder's Square at the center of Babcock Ranch.

Founder's Square, Babcock Ranch

(941) 206-3457 | babcockranch.com

Bonita Springs National Art Festivals

Jan. 10–11, Feb. 7–8, March 14–15, 2026

One of the top-ranked juried art festivals in the country, presented by Arts Bonita, Bonita Springs National Art Festival attracts more than 200 artists and packed crowds. Attendees can browse and purchase work from award-winning artists and sample treats from local food vendors.

10450 Reynolds St., Bonita Springs

239-495-8989 | artsbonita.org



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SIGNATURE EVENTS

Bonita Springs Pride Festival**Nov 9-10, 2025**

Bonita Springs Pridefest celebrates equality and diversity with performances, vendors and community groups.

10150 Bonita Beach Rd., Bonita Springs

239-304-9407 | naplespride.org

Bonita Springs Seafood & Music Festival**Feb. 6-8, 2026**

Attendees can enjoy a variety of food options, live music and a unique arts and craft market as they relax with friends.

28001 Old 41 Rd., Bonita Springs

(941) 487-8061 | paragonfestivals.com

Burrowing Owl Festival**Feb. 28, 2026**

This festival celebrates Cape Coral's burrowing owls. Attendees can enjoy exhibits, guided wildlife tours, unique vendors, children's activities, food and beverages and a silent auction.

Rotary Park, 5505 Rose Garden Rd., Cape Coral

239-549-4606 | ccfriendsofwildlife.org

Cape Coral Festival of the Arts**Jan. 10-11, 2026**

Food vendors and live musicians join hundreds of artists for this festive juried art event. The event is one of the largest special events in Lee County, and was voted the 5th Best Art Festival in the nation by Sunshine Artists.

Cape Coral Pkwy. between Del Prado Blvd. and Vincennes, Cape Coral 239-699-7942 | capecoralartfestival.com

Cape Coral Music & Arts Fusion Walk**Feb. 28 and Mar. 14, 2026**

The Cape Coral Music & Arts Fusion Walk promotes local businesses is a family-friendly event that features pop-up shops by local arts, live music and an array of vendors showcasing handmade, original work.

**Cape Coral Oktoberfest**

COURTESY PHOTO

SE 47th Ter., Cape Coral

239-574-0401 | capecoral.gov

Cape Coral Oktoberfest**Annually in October**

Cape Coral hosts one of Florida's largest Oktoberfest celebrations complete with beer gardens, German food and live Bavarian music.

2101 SW Pine Island Rd., Cape Coral
239-283-1400 | capecoraloktoberfest.com

MAIN THEATRE NOV 21 - DEC 28	MAIN THEATRE JAN 3 - FEB 14	MAIN THEATRE FEB 20 - APR 4	MAIN THEATRE APR 10 - MAY 16	MAIN THEATRE MAY 22 - JUN 20	MAIN THEATRE JUN 26 - AUG 8
OFF BROADWAY PALM NOV 27 - DEC 28	OFF BROADWAY PALM JAN 16 - FEB 21	OFF BROADWAY PALM FEB 27 - APR 11	OFF BROADWAY PALM APR 17 - MAY 23	CONCERTS Tribute to the King DECEMBER 31 One of These Nights JANUARY 26-27 Piano Men Generations FEBRUARY 23-24 Toby MARCH 9-10 December '63 MARCH 29-30	

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SIGNATURE EVENTS

Island Hopper
Songwriter Festival

COURTESY PHOTO

Cape Coral Red, White & Boom**July 4, 2026**

Cape Coral celebrates Independence Day along the riverfront each July with fireworks, food vendors and live entertainment.

Cape Coral Bridge area, Cape Coral
239-573-3128 | capeboom.com

Coconut Point Art Festival**Feb. 14, 2026**

Coconut Point becomes the backdrop for a showcase of more than 200 artists displaying life-size sculptures, paintings, jewelry, photography and more. Attendees can browse exhibits and enjoy the shopping area's many stores and restaurants.

23181 Via Villaggio Dr., Estero
(561) 746-6615 | artfestival.com

ECHO's Global Food & Farm Festival**Mar. 15-21, 2026**

Attendees can tour a 57-acre global farm and experience a tropical rainforest demonstration,

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SIGNATURE EVENTS

learn about alternative energy sources and discover ways to make an impact on world hunger.

17391 Durrance Road, North Fort Myers
239-543-3246 | echonet.org

Edison Festival of Light – Grand Parade

Feb. 21, 2026

The Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade is Southwest Florida's largest night parade. Spectators gather in downtown Fort Myers to marvel at the succession of illuminated floats, marching bands and dance troupes winding through the streets. A smaller daytime Junior Parade is held Feb. 15, 2026.

Downtown River District, Fort Myers
239-334-2999 | edisonfestival.org

Fort Myers Art Walk

First Friday of every month

Art galleries stay open late and outdoor art exhibits, street musicians and vendors fill the river District each month in this celebration of Fort Myers' robust arts scene.

First and Hendry St., Fort Myers
239-313-5129 | myriverdistrict.com

Fort Myers Film Festival

May 20-24, 2026

The 16th annual film festival brings film enthusiasts together to celebrate the art of cinema. An important platform for independent filmmakers, the festival showcases independent films from a wide array of genres at venues throughout Fort Myers including the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center and the Calusa Planetarium.

2301 First St., Fort Myers
239-810-6323 | fortmyersfilmfestival.com

Fort Myers Music Walk

Third Friday of every month

This free public event features live performances from local and regional musicians throughout the bars, restaurants and art galleries in downtown Fort Myers.

First and Hendry St., Fort Myers
239-313-5129 | myriverdistrict.com

Fort Myers Seafood & Music Festival

Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2026

The 5th Annual Fort Myers Seafood & Music Festival offers attendees fresh local seafood, desserts and live musical performances. The event is produced by Paragon Festivals in partnership with the Fort Myers River District Alliance and promises a talented lineup of performers and plenty of fresh food.

2000 W. First St., Fort Myers
(941) 487-8061 | paragonfestivals.com

Island Hopper Songwriter Festival

Sept. 18–27, 2026

This 10-day music festival in Southwest Florida features performances by BMI singer-songwriters and local performers. Hosted in venues throughout Lee County, the festival travels from Captiva Island, Cape Coral, downtown Fort Myers and ends on Fort Myers Beach. Most of the

Harold's



Chef Harold Balink

15250 South Tamiami Trail
Fort Myers, FL 33908
239.849.0622
Open Tuesday–Saturday

www.haroldscuisine.com



CREATIVE AMERICAN



Harold's was founded in 2015 by Harold Balink, one of the most well-known chefs in Southwest Florida. This upscale restaurant features a rotating weekly menu which features dishes that show the Chef's sensibilities. All dishes are made from scratch and farm-sourced.

The restaurant space has a modern, but intimate atmosphere with a friendly staff. Featuring a full bar, semi-open kitchen, and new dining room, Harold's is a sleek, comfortable, nuanced dining experience for all ages.



SIGNATURE EVENTS

shows are free with some featured ticketed events.

Multiple venues, Lee County
(800) 237-6444
island-hopperfest.visitfortmyers.com

Sanibel Shell Show & Festival**Mar. 5, 2026**

Sanibel's world-famous shelling festival, organized by the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, celebrates the treasures of the sea with exhibits, shell art and educational displays.

2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel
239-472-2155 | sanibelcommunityhouse.net

Sanibel-Captiva Rotary Arts & Crafts Festival**Feb. 14–15, 2026**

Held each Presidents Day weekend, this juried fine arts and crafts festival highlights talented artists in Sanibel and Captiva each year.

2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel
239-427-1909 | sanibelartfair.com

Sounds of Jazz & Blues**Mar. 28, 2026**

Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department brings some of the area's best jazz and blues musicians together for the city's foremost musical festival, featuring live entertainment, food and fun.

1800 NW 28th Ave., Cape Coral
239-573-3128 | capeconcerts.com

Southwest Florida Agricultural Expo**Feb. 26–Mar. 8, 2026**

Since 1924, the Southwest Florida Lee County Fair, now the Southwest Florida Agricultural Exposition has showcased local agriculture and horticulture. The event features livestock, rides, crafts and live entertainment.

11831 Bayshore Rd., Fort Myers
(888) 212-3258 | swflagexpo.com

Southwest Florida Reading Festival**Mar. 7, 2026**

Authors from every genre gather to share their creative process with eager fans of all ages in this free celebration of literature. Attendees can meet the authors, buy autographed books and enjoy reading-related activities including crafts, book readings and discussions with members of the Florida Writers Association, Gulf Coast Writers Association and Southwest Florida Fiction Writers.

2450 First St., Fort Myers
239-533-4832 | readfest.org

The Southwest Florida Wine and Food Fest**Feb. 27–28, 2026**

This signature event of the SWFL Children's Charities is a two-day festival featuring themed dinners held at private venues throughout Southwest Florida, followed by a Grand Tasting and live auction on Saturday at Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa.

5001 Coconut Rd., Estero and other venues
swflwinefest.org



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SIGNATURE EVENTS

COLLIER COUNTY

Art In The Park**Nov. 29, 2025, Jan. 31, 2026, April 4, 2026**

A celebrated Naples tradition that began in 1957, Art In The Park is a series of juried outdoor fairs that feature exhibitions from artists across the state in a wide array of mediums including ceramics, glass, painting and sculpture.

755 8th Ave. S., Naples
239-262-6517 | naplesart.org

Cars as Art**Apr. 6, 2026**

Classic, vintage and exotic automobiles are displayed as art alongside sculpture and paintings in this event, judged by professional artists rather than car experts, that merges automotive design with fine art.

1010 Winterberry Dr., Marco Island
239-394-4221 | marcoislandart.org

Cars on Fifth**Feb. 1, 2026**

This prestigious automotive show, organized by the Ferrari Club of Naples, features over 400 luxury vehicles. The festival returns for its 22nd year in a grand showcase of exotic cars, supercars and classics lined up along Fifth Avenue in Naples.

Fifth Avenue South, Naples
carsonfifth.com

Christmas Boat Parade**Saturday, December 13, 2025**

Boats decked out with holiday lights and decorations journey through the local waterways in this festive annual event. Attendees can purchase tickets to view the parade from Naples City Doc or check out the action from Pinchers Tin City, Riverwalk Restaurant, Naples Landing, Kelly's Fish House, The Boat House on Naples Bay and Bayview Park.

239-682-0900 | miacc.org

Chubb Classic**February 2026**

A staple on the PGA Tour Champions circuit, the Chubb Classic draws veteran stars to the Tiburón Black Course each February. With three rounds of stroke play, pro-am events and community engagement, it's one of Naples's marquee golf weeks.

Tiburón Golf Club, Naples
239-593-2200 | chubbclassic.com

CME Group Tour Championship**Nov. 20-23, 2025**

As the LPGA season's culminating event, the CME Group Tour Championship brings the top women professionals to Naples in late November. It features a limited field competing for the season title and large prize pool over four rounds.

2620 Tiburon Dr, Naples
cmegrouptourchampionship.com

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SIGNATURE EVENTS

Collier Fair Exposition**Mar. 19-29, 2026**

Offering entertainment, agricultural exhibitions, carnival rides, games and live music, Collier Fair Exposition celebrates its 50th year. Featuring activities like 4-H competitions, animal exhibits and displays of Collier County's farming heritage make this a popular event for the whole family.

751 39th Ave. NE, Naples
239-455-1444 | collierfair.com

Downtown Naples Art Fair**March 21-22, 2026**

This prestigious outdoor art fair features original works by local, national and international artists. The two-day festival showcases many artistic styles and mediums. Attendees can interact with artists as they support the arts community in Naples.

8th Ave. S., Naples
239-262-6517 | naplesart.org

Evening on Fifth**Second Thursday each month, year-round**

Visitors can enjoy exceptional dining, shopping and an array of vibrant musical performances lining the sidewalks of Fifth Avenue South on the second Thursday of every month throughout the year.

5th Avenue S, Naples
239-692-8436 | naplesgov.com

Everglades Seafood Festival**Feb. 13-15, 2026**

Over 50,000 attendees swarm upon the Stone Crab Capital of the World for this famous seafood festival each year. As the event marks its 56th year, attendees can enjoy three days of live country music, carnival rides, arts, crafts and mouth-watering seafood.

102 Copeland Ave. N, Everglades City
evergladesseafoodfestival.com

Farm City BBQ**Nov. 26, 2025**

This agricultural celebration features farm exhibits, produce displays, live music and community booths. Volunteers and local elected officials prepare and serve a steak lunch to patrons. The event supports local youth programs, including 4H and Youth Leadership Collier.

751 39th Ave. NE, Naples
farmcitybbq.com

Florida International Air Show**Nov. 2026**

The Florida International Air Show (FIAS) multi-day event won the USA TODAY 10Best Airshows Readers' Choice Awards. Featuring aeronautical performances and displays of aircraft and vehicles, this popular event offers attendees the opportunity to learn more about aviation, space and military services at this popular annual event.

The Great Canoe Races of Naples**May 26, 2026**

This canoe racing event features local paddlers competing along coastal or river routes. Spectators gather at launch points for timed heats and awards presentations. Attendees can enjoy a vendor fair, live Entertainment and a beer garden while cheering on the racers.

50 Riverside Circle, Naples
info@naplescanoeraces.com
naplescanoeraces.com

Gulf Coast Orchid Alliance's Orchid Show and Sale**Mar. 22-24, 2026**

Hundreds of exotic orchids in full bloom fill North Collier Regional Park with color as workshops and sales from specialty growers delight plant lovers and collectors alike.

15000 Livingston Rd., Naples
239-269-6389 | gulfcoastorchidalliance.org

LiveFest**Dec. 13, 2025**

This evening concert experience features major country and pop artists hosted outdoors at The Ritz-Carlton, Tiburón. Attendees can enjoy quality live music and take in the panoramic views of Naples at livefest.com

Marco Island Outdoor Art and Craft Show**Jan. 6-7, Feb. 10-11 & Mar. 23-24, 2026**

Juried artists display fine art, photography, jewelry and crafts in a relaxed island setting. Each show pairs artistry with live music and local food, allowing attendees an opportunity to shop and enjoy Marco Island's vibrant artistic community.

1010 Winterberry Dr., Marco Island
239-394-4221 | marcoislandart.org

Naples Artcrafters**Nov. 8 and Dec. 13, 2025, Jan. 10, Feb. 28, Mar. 7 and Apr. 11, 2026**

Monthly juried art and craft shows feature local artisans working in clay, glass, fiber and wood. The series highlights handmade craftsmanship and creative community spirit.

755 8th Ave. S, Naples
jordanoska_g@yahoo.com | naplesartcrafters.com

Naples Boat Show**Jan. 22-25, 2026**

The Naples Boat Show is the largest premier recreational show in the Naples-Marco Island area. The event takes place at the Sugden Regional Park and Naples City Dock, and a complimentary shuttle service is available. Boating enthusiasts can browse displays by marinas, boat dealers and other marine-related businesses. The event is managed by the Marine Industries Association of Collier County.

4284 Avalon Dr. and 880 12th Ave S, Naples
naplesboatshow.com

Naples Christmas Parade**Dec. 3, 2025**

Naples ushers in the holidays with a sparkling nighttime parade of decorated floats, marching bands, dance troupes and costumed performers along Fifth Avenue South. The city transforms into a corridor of lights and music for this long-standing tradition.

5th Ave. S, Naples
239-213-7120 | naplesgov.com

Naples Craft Beer Festival**March 7, 2026**

Rotary's signature fundraiser showcases over 100 craft beers, chef pairings, live music and People's Choice tastings. Proceeds benefit the North Naples Rotary Club Foundation.

436 Bayfront Pl., Naples
naplescraftbeerfest.com

Naples Downtown Art Fair**Mar. 21-22, 2026**

This juried outdoor showcase features fine art, sculpture, glass and photography from artists across the country. Live demonstrations and performances bring a festive mood to the weekend.

755 8th Ave. S, Naples
naplesart.org



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SIGNATURE EVENTS

Naples Flower Show & Garden Market**Apr. 5–6, 2026**

The Naples Flower Show & Garden Market is the largest juried flower show in Southwest Florida. The Naples Garden Club and Naples Botanical Garden present dazzling floral designs, horticultural exhibits and a market of plants and garden accessories.

4820 Bayshore Dr., Naples
239-262-1272 | naplesgardenclub.org

Naples International Film Festival**Oct. 2026**

Artis—Naples Film hosts a series of independent film screenings, panel discussions and events. An awards ceremony at the end of the festival, recognizes the best featured independent films and filmmakers.

5833 Pelican Bay Blvd., Naples, FL
239-597-1900 | artisnaples.org

Naples National Art Fair**Feb. 20–22, 2026**

Ranked among the nation's top art fairs, this prestigious event showcases original works by 200 juried artists. The weekend brings collectors, critics and art lovers together in downtown Naples.

755 8th Ave. S, Naples
239-262-6517 | naplesart.org

Naples New Year's Art Fair**Jan. 3–4, 2026**

The first major art event of the year features more than 250 juried artists exhibiting paintings, photography and sculpture throughout downtown Naples.

755 8th Ave. S, Naples
239-262-6517 | naplesart.org

Naples Pridefest**Apr. 18, 2026**

Naples Pridefest is a lively celebration of equality and diversity with performances, vendors and community groups. The event supports and benefits the Naples Pride Center.

755 8th Ave. S, Naples
239-304-9407 | naplespride.org

Naples St. Patrick's Day Parade**Mar. 16, 2026**

This Parade has grown into the state's largest privately funded parade. Complete with marching bands, Irish dancers and decorated floats the parade forms a wave of green down Fifth Avenue and draws over 40,000 attendees and has donated more than \$200,000 to local schools in the past 5 years.

Starts at the intersection of 3rd St. S and 10th Ave. S
info@naplesparade.com | naplesparade.com

Naples Winter Wine Festival**Jan. 30–Feb. 1, 2026**

World-renowned vintners and chefs unite for a weekend of tasting events, wine dinners and culinary collaborations benefiting children's charities across Collier County.

5833 Pelican Bay Blvd. and private venues, Naples
239-514-2239 | napleswinefestival.com

Stone Crab Festival**Annually in October**

Naples' waterfront celebrates the start of stone crab season with live music, seafood



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SIGNATURE EVENTS

vendors, arts and crafts booths, and family activities. The “Cracking of the Claw” ceremony typically opens the weekend, and local restaurants along Tin City and Bayfront offer food and refreshments for attendees.

1200 5th Ave S, Naples
stonecrabfestival.com

Swamp Buggy Races

Jan. 18, Feb. 22, April 4, 2026

Since 1949, The World Famous Swamp Buggy Races have showcased Southwest Florida’s unique history and culture through a series of racing spectacles featuring custom-built vehicles that speed through water-filled tracks.

8520 Rattlesnake Hammock Rd., Naples
239-774-2701 | swampbuggy.com

Terra Cotta Invitational

April 16-18, 2026

This prestigious amateur event is held each April at Naples National Golf Club. The 54-hole field draws top junior, collegiate and mid-amateur players from across the country. With its strong World Amateur Golf Ranking status, it’s one of Naples’s premier golf weeks.

9325 Collier Blvd, Naples
239-775-8911 | terracottainvitational.com

Third Street South Farmers Market

Featuring over 60 local vendors, this long-standing artisan market in Old Naples sells produce, baked goods, flowers, seafood, jams and prepared foods every Saturday in downtown Naples.

Third Street South between Broad Ave. S & 13th Ave. S
thirdstreetsouth.com

Uptown Naples Fine Art Festival

Jan. 31–Feb. 1, 2026

This juried art show features painters, sculptors, photographers and jewelers in a relaxed setting where attendees can mingle with artists and collect original work.

800 Laurel Oak Dr., Naples
(561) 746-6615 | artfestival.com

Minto US Open Pickleball Championships

April 11–18, 2026

Naples is known as “The Pickleball Capital of the World,” and more than 55,000 fans

and 3,450 players from all from all over the world come to USOP National Pickleball Center in Naples each year for a week of competition and celebration of America’s fastest-growing sport.

3520 Thomasson Dr., Naples
239-778-9629 | usopenpickleball.com

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Annual Taste of Punta Gorda & Beyond

Mar. 8, 2026

This one-day food fest features over 60 restaurants, dessert, drink, art and craft vendors with live music and a children’s area. Proceeds benefit local nonprofits and student scholarships through the Punta Gorda Rotary Club.

100 Nesbit St., Punta Gorda
taste@puntagordarotary.org | tasteofpuntagorda.org

Babcock Ranch Seafood & Music Festival

Feb. 13–15, 2026

Seafood lovers can savor fresh shrimp, oysters, crabs and coastal favorites while enjoying live music from regional bands. The festival features a marketplace of artisan vendors and family-friendly fun in the scenic lakeside community of Babcock Ranch.

42850 Crescent Loop, Babcock Ranch
(941) 487-8061 | paragonfestivals.com

Englewood Seafood & Music Festival

Feb. 27-Mar. 1, 2026

Top musicians from multiple genres provide a weekend of live music at this festival that offers a diverse selection of seafood, meat and vegetarian offerings from local restaurants. Attendees can browse a marketplace filled with arts, crafts and food items.

401 N. Indiana Ave., Englewood
(941) 487-8061 | paragonfestivals.com

Florida International Air Show

Nov. 1–2, 2025

Thrilling aerobatic performers, vintage aircraft and military flyovers fill Punta Gorda’s skies during this annual aviation celebration. The event honors flight history and innovation.

28000 Airport Rd., Punta Gorda
(833) 743-3427 | floridaairshow.com

MangoMania

July 11, 2026

The Greater Pine Island Chamber of Commerce hosts this annual celebration of mango season that features local growers, live music and tropical-themed food and crafts.

9940 Stringfellow Rd, St. James City
239-283-0888 | pineislandchamber.org

Punta Gorda Hibiscus Festival

May 1–3, 2026

Punta Gorda’s signature floral event features plant sales, art, music and family fun. The festival celebrates the unique history and charm of the town and its connection to one of the world’s most renowned hybridizers, Harry R. Goulding.

400 W Retta Esplanade, Punta Gorda
thehibiscusfestival.com

Punta Gorda Seafood & Music Festival

Jan. 16–18, 2026

Attendees will enjoy seafood specialties, national bands and coastal crafts at this lively waterfront celebration. Guests can savor food from the Gulf while enjoying blues, jazz and rock performances.

Laisley Park, 100 Nesbit St., Punta Gorda
(941) 487-8061 | paragonfestivals.com

Sullivan Street Craft Festival

Jan. 17–18, 2026

This two-day craft show highlights juried artisans in jewelry, woodworking, glass, fiber and fine crafts. Shoppers can stroll through the shaded streets, chat with artists and enjoy live music from local musicians.

331 Sullivan St., Punta Gorda
(561) 746-6615 | artfestival.com

World’s Richest Tarpon Tournament

May 13–14, 2026

Anglers from around the world converge on Boca Grande Pass to compete for record tarpon and top prizes. The event celebrates the island’s legendary sportfishing heritage.

Boca Grande Pass, Boca Grande
(941) 964-0568 | bocagrandechamber.com

SWFL ATTRACTIONS

LEE COUNTY

The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum

This is the only accredited museum in the United States devoted solely to shells and mollusks. Visitors can explore living aquariums, learn about local ecosystems and participate in family-oriented shelling events and citizen-science programs.

3075 Sanibel-Captiva Road, Sanibel
239-395-2233 | shellmuseum.org

ECHO Global Farm

Visitors can explore this world-renowned demonstration farm where sustainable agriculture meets hands-on education. The farm features small-scale farming models used worldwide to combat hunger, tropical gardens, and a friendly petting zoo for kids.

17391 Durrance Rd., North Fort Myers
239-543-3246 | echonet.org

Edison & Ford Winter Estates

The restored winter homes of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford offer a glimpse into the lives of these inventors. Visitors can tour their homes, gardens, museum and working laboratory. New exhibits highlight Edison's environmental experiments and Ford's early automotive designs.

2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers
239-334-7419 | edisonfordwinterestates.org

Everglades Wonder Gardens

This classic Old Florida attraction blends wildlife rescue with lush botanical beauty. Guests can meet flamingos, parrots, tortoises and alligators while exploring tropical paths shaded by century-old trees.

27180 Old 41 Rd., Bonita Springs
239-992-2591 | wondergardens.org

Food Forest at Florida Gulf Coast University

A living laboratory on the FGCU campus,

this student-managed permaculture project demonstrates sustainable gardening and edible landscaping. The Food Forest showcases tropical fruit trees, native plants, and regenerative agriculture practices that inspire future environmental leaders.

10501 FGCU Blvd. S., Fort Myers
239-590-1000 | fgcu.edu

Gator Mike's Family Fun Park

Cape Coral's adventure park features multi-level go-kart tracks, mini golf, zip lines and a 6,000-square-foot arcade.

35 N.E. Pine Island Rd., Cape Coral
239-574-4386 | gatormikes.com

IMAG History & Science Center

An interactive space where science and imagination meet, IMAG offers aquariums, animal encounters, and STEM-inspired exhibits, such as the Google Earth Wall and Nano Lab.

2000 Cranford Ave., Fort Myers
239-243-0043 | theimag.org



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CONCERTS | SPECIAL OCCASIONS | CAR SHOWS | BOAT SHOWS
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SWFL ATTRACTIONS

**J.N. “Ding” Darling
National Wildlife Refuge**

Nature lovers can immerse themselves in this renowned wildlife refuge known for its rich mangrove ecosystem and diverse bird populations. Visitors can drive, bike or kayak through scenic trails teeming with native species. The sanctuary provides educational exhibits at the visitor center.

1 Wildlife Dr., Sanibel Island
239-472-1100 | fws.gov

Southern Fresh Farms

This nonprofit farm is dedicated to sustainable agriculture and community education, offering visitors a taste of local life through seasonal produce, honey, flowers and farm events. It's a family-friendly spot with food trucks, live music and volunteer opportunities.

8500 Penzance Blvd., Fort Myers
239-768-0309 | southernfreshfarms.com

Valerie's House – Fort Myers

Valerie's House is a compassionate community organization supporting children and families coping with loss. The organization provides group activities, counseling and volunteer opportunities..

1762 Fowler St., Fort Myers
239-204-5804 | valerieshouse.org

COLLIER COUNTY

**Audubon Corkscrew
Swamp Sanctuary**

A 13,000-acre haven for wildlife and bird enthusiasts, this sanctuary is famous for its ancient bald cypress forest and the serene 2.25-mile boardwalk that winds through wetlands and pine flatwoods.

375 Sanctuary Rd. W., Naples
239-348-9151 | corkscrew.audubon.org

**C'mon – Golisano Children's
Museum of Naples**

This hands-on museum celebrates curiosity and creativity by inviting

children to explore through play and imagination. New rotating exhibits and community programs continue to make it a favorite destination for education and discovery.

15080 Livingston Rd., Naples
239-514-0084 | cmon.org

**Collier Museum at
Government Center**

Showcasing the region's unique heritage, this free museum traces Collier County's journey from early pioneers and Calusa culture to modern development. Visitors enjoy artifacts, photographs, and outdoor exhibits, including a restored locomotive and historic cottages.

3331 Tamiami Trail E., Naples
239-252-8476 | colliermuseums.com

**Holocaust Museum & Cohen
Education Center**

The Holocaust Museum & Cohen Education Center presents artifacts from Holocaust history. Visitors can tour and



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explore rotating exhibits, educational programs, private group tours, lectures, film screenings and special events.

975 Imperial Golf Course Blvd., Ste.
108, Naples
239-261-1777 | hmcec.org

Naples Botanical Garden

This tropical paradise features plants from around the world and native Florida habitats. Seasonal exhibitions, yoga in the garden and sustainability workshops highlight the garden's mission to connect people and nature.

4820 Bayshore Dr., Naples
239-643-7275 | naplesgarden.org

Naples Depot Museum

Set in a beautifully restored 1927 Seaboard Air Line Railway station, this museum brings the golden age of rail travel to life. Exhibits explore Southwest Florida's transportation history, including the early days of travel, trade and tourism.

1051 5th Ave. S., Naples
239-252-8476 | colliermuseums.com

Naples Train Museum

Located inside the historic depot, the museum features operating model railroads and railroad memorabilia. Children and train enthusiasts alike enjoy the detailed displays and interactive exhibits capturing the magic of railroading.

1051 5th Ave. S., Naples
239-262-1776 | naplestrainmuseum.org

Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens

Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens is a nationally accredited zoo. Visitors can meet lions, monkeys, giraffes and learn about global conservation efforts through interactive talks and feeding experiences.

1590 Goodlette-Frank Rd., Naples
239-315-7626 | napleszoo.org

REVS Institute

Among the world's top automotive museums, REVS showcases a remarkable collection of historically significant cars. The institute also serves as a research center dedicated to the study and preservation of automotive history.

2500 Horseshoe Dr. S., Naples
239-687-7387 | revsinstitute.org

Shy Wolf Sanctuary Education & Experience Center

Home to rescued wolves, wolfdogs and other exotic animals, this nonprofit offers guided tours and volunteer opportunities.

1161 27th St. SW, Naples
239-775-5696 | shywolfssanctuary.org

St. Matthew's House

St. Matthew's House operates thrift stores, food pantries and Campbell Lodge shelter that help provide food, shelter and hope to individuals facing homelessness or hardship. Volunteers are welcome.

2001 Airport-Pulling Rd. S., Naples
239-774-0500 | stmatthewshouse.org

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Babcock Ranch Eco-Tours

Guided swamp buggy tours take guests through four unique ecosystems to spot alligators, birds and other wildlife. Naturalists share stories of Florida's ranching and conservation heritage.

8502 State Road 31, Punta Gorda
800-505-5583 | babcockranchecotours.com

Blanchard House Museum

Dedicated to preserving African American history in

SWFL ATTRACTIONS

Southwest Florida, this museum offers exhibits, historical education and cultural events.

406 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Punta Gorda
941-575-7518 | blanchardhousemuseum.org

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center

Situated on 46,000 acres of preserved land, this center features hiking trails, kayak tours and hands-on ecology programs.

10941 Burnt Store Rd., Punta Gorda
941-575-5435 | checfloida.org

Harry Chapin Food Bank

Serving Charlotte County and beyond, this branch distributes fresh and non-perishable food through partner agencies and mobile pantries. Volunteers are always needed to assist with sorting and community food drives.

(Additional Fort Myers Location)
4009 Whidden Blvd., Port Charlotte
239-334-7007 | harrychapinfoodbank.org

Iguanaland

Founded by conservationist Ty Park, Iguanaland houses one of the largest reptile collections in the world. Visitors can meet rare iguanas and other reptiles while learning about global conservation and responsible pet ownership.

33900 Bermont Rd., Punta Gorda
941-844-5350 | iguanaland.com

The James and Barbara Moore Observatory

This observatory invites guests to view planets, galaxies and nebulae through high-powered telescopes. Star parties and public viewing nights make astronomy accessible and inspiring.

26300 Airport Rd., Punta Gorda
941-637-3518 | fsw.edu/charlotte/observatory

The Military Heritage Museum

Operated by veterans, the museum honors military service through immersive exhibits, flight simulators and a virtual reality room. Visitors can explore

three floors of history and participate in lectures and community events.

900 W. Marion Ave., Punta Gorda
941-575-9002 | militaryheritagemuseum.org

Octagon Wildlife Sanctuary

This nonprofit sanctuary rescues and rehabilitates exotic animals, including tigers, lions, bears and primates. Open to visitors on weekends, it also offers volunteer programs for animal care and education.

41660 Horseshoe Rd., Punta Gorda
239-543-1130 | octagonwildlife.org

Valerie's House

This organization offers grief support and mentorship for children and families. Community members can volunteer, donate meals or help facilitate family events.

Additional Naples and Fort Myers Locations
2334 Loveland Blvd., Port Charlotte
239-204-5804 | valerieshouse.org

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HISTORIC DISTRICTS

WHERE THE PAST AND PRESENT CONVERGE

Downtown Naples

Since the 1950s, Fifth Avenue South and Third Street South have been the center of Naples identity — a blend of seaside elegance and small-town charm. Early visitors arrived by boat at the Naples Pier, trading with the Seminole long before boutique storefronts and fine restaurants lined the sidewalks. The district's architecture preserves that legacy of understated luxury, where history meets high style.

In recent years, the city's cultural core has expanded to include the Naples Design District. This creative corridor, known for its artisan studios, galleries and modern dining spots captures Naples' evolution from a quiet fishing village to one of the Gulf Coast's most sophisticated destinations.

Downtown Bonita Springs

Old 41 Road has been the center of Bonita Springs for years and has never been afraid of transformation. In the 1930s, visitors flocked to the Everglades Wonder Gardens, where flamingos and alligators basked in lush greenery. Almost a century later, the reimagined Wonder Gardens remains a centerpiece of the town — honoring the past while serving as a modern botanical and wildlife attraction.

Nearby, the historic Shangri-La Hotel

The Naples Players Sugden Community Theatre on 5th Ave.



DAVID WISHTISCHIN / FLORIDA WEEKLY

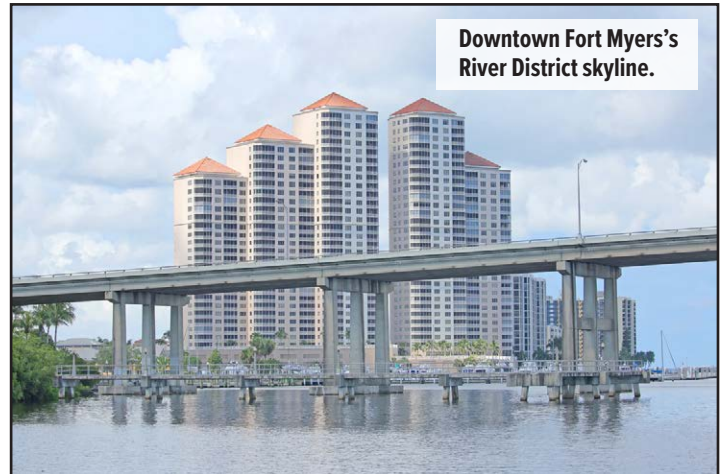
still evokes Bonita's early reputation for health and hospitality. Around it, a new era of vitality thrives in the preserved buildings, which have been transformed into niche restaurants, breweries and cocktail lounges. Riverside Park is home to concerts, festivals and community groups, while new ventures, such as Sugarshack Downtown, feature live music, craft beer and a welcoming, hometown vibe.

Fort Myers Historic River District

Fort Myers' Historic River District reflects a rare success story — a downtown saved from decline through preservation and pride. Once overshadowed by suburban growth, its century-old buildings have become home to restaurants, galleries and festivals.

The Edison & Ford Winter Estates helped spark that revival — the 1915 vaudeville house transformed into The Florida Repertory Theatre, the old federal building became an art center and restaurants like The Veranda tell a story of endurance and reinvention.

Downtown Fort Myers's River District skyline.



COURTESY PHOTO

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3-4 PM Play along with Local Uke Clubs
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WORLD UKE DAY
FREE CONCERT!

Bands at Shangri-La Springs Hotel, Sugar Shack, Heavenly Shakes, Rooftop at Riverside, and Chartreuse from 12-3 and 7-10 PM

Concert at 4:00 - 6:00 PM
LIL' REV - Ray Cyrgrymus
Moon Dog - Devin & Ally
The Tropical Sons Plus Daughter
at "Riverside Park Band Shell"

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Today, the River District features rooftop lounges, outdoor markets and places like Bay Street Yard.

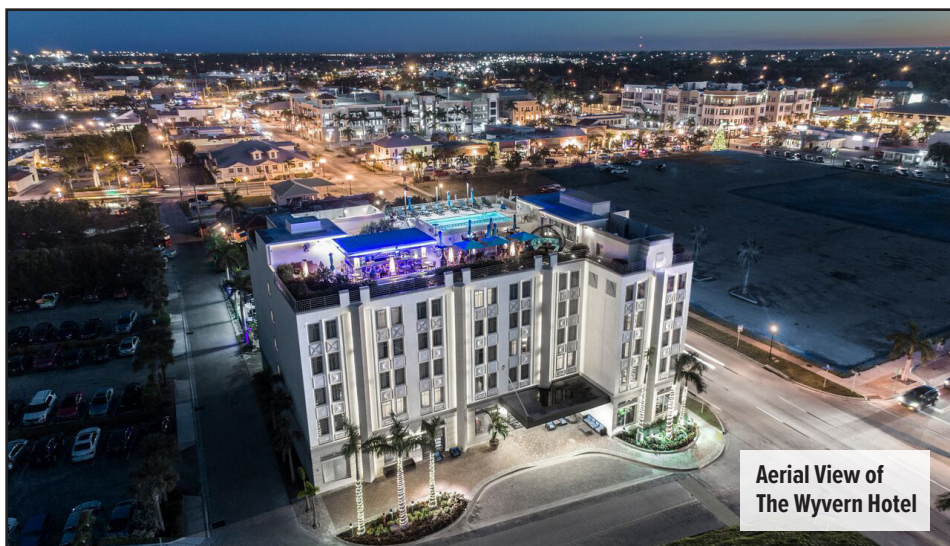
Downtown Punta Gorda

Founded in the 1800s, Punta Gorda preserves its roots as a harbor town with colorful murals that depict settlers, fishermen and the lives of early settlers. Marion Avenue's lineup of eclectic shops and restaurants — including longtime favorites like The Perfect Cap and Celtic Ray Public House — echoes both history and evolution.

Across the river, Sunseeker Resort Charlotte Harbor draws new energy to the waterfront while honoring the town's maritime legacy. Rooftop lounges at the Wyvern Hotel and the lively TT's Tiki Bar at Four Points by Sheraton embrace life on the water. At the same time, Laishley Park and the surrounding trails provide opportunities to enjoy nature.

Boca Grande

Boca Grande began as the home of



Aerial View of
The Wyvern Hotel

COURTESY PHOTO

tarpon fishing, grand hotels and railroad tycoons escaping northern winters. The Gasparilla Inn, built in 1913, still conveys refined sophistication, and the old rail line now doubles as a scenic bike and golf cart path.

Today, the downtown area features

shops, pastel architecture and canopy-lined streets. The Johann Fust Library, century-old churches and the Port Boca Grande Lighthouse & Museum reflect the rich history of Boca Grande. Visitors to Boca Grande enjoy a timeless mix of elegance and unhurried charm. ■

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HURRICANE SAFETY TIPS

BE PREPARED FOR YOUR FIRST STORM SEASON

For those who love a tropical vibe, there's no more inviting place in the continental United States than Southwest Florida. We've got it all: the sunshine. The beaches. The diversity of palms, plants and wildlife.

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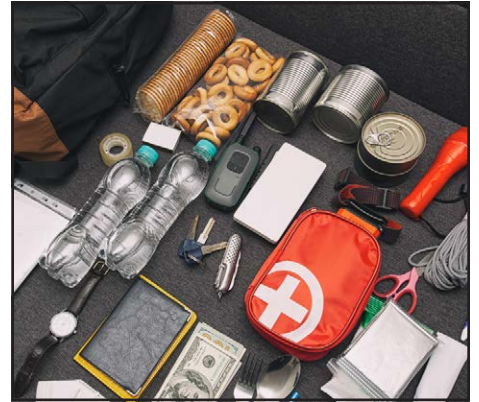
But paradise sometimes comes at a cost.

In Florida, the tradeoff is from June 1 to November 30 — the official dates of hurricane season (although that's not written in stone). Hurricanes are notoriously unpredictable, despite the best attempts to track the where of their specific paths or the when

of the precise times they'll make landfall. And no area of the state is immune.

Fortunately, there are many ways to prepare for an oncoming storm. The following checklist will give you the foundational precautions you need to know. This will guide you on what to do from before the start of the season to when a hurricane is predicted to after the storm is over.

Keep this where you can easily find it. The biggest danger is often not the storm itself but failure to prepare and heed evacuation warnings. Be smart and be safe.



BEFORE THE STORM

AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE Insurance preparation

- Examine all insurance policy coverage.
- Add insurance hotline number to your phone and establish

online account access.

- Photograph and document all personal belongings.
- Compile master list of emergency contacts and account information.

Maintain a list of important

phone numbers including:

- County emergency management office
- Evacuation sites
- Doctors
- Banks
- Schools

- Veterinarian
- Out of town contacts
- Friends and family

Gathering important documents

- Physical documents should be kept in a waterproof container

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HURRICANE SAFETY TIPS

- Cash (banks and ATMs may not be available after a storm)
- Medical records
- Banking information
- Credit card numbers
- Copies of social security cards
- Copies of birth and/or marriage certificates
- Copy of will
- Other personal documents
- Set of car, house and office keys

Lighting and communication

- Flashlights (Do not use candles)
- LED lanterns
- NOAA Weather Radio
- Batteries (varying sizes)
- Cell phone chargers

Clothing and protection

- Rain gear such as jackets, hats, umbrellas and rain boots
- Sturdy shoes or boots and work gloves

Determine your protection strategy

- Identify your safest options for shelter from flooding and high winds.
- Develop both an evacuation plan and a sheltering-in-place plan.
- Keep your motor vehicle tanks filled with gasoline.
- Check motor vehicle tire pressure and fluid levels (oil, coolant).

MAKE SAFETY PLANS**Evacuation planning**

- During hurricane season, find out if you live in a place that might need to evacuate. This includes evacuation zones, areas that flood easily, mobile homes or buildings that aren't safe. Knowing this helps you get ready and understand what to do when local officials give evacuation orders. For more information or to find your zone, check with local Emergency Management or visit www.floridadisaster.org/knowyourzone.
- If officials order evacuation, leave without delay.

- Determine your destination, transportation method and lodging.
 - Arrange transportation assistance in advance if needed or if using public transit.
 - Mobile homes, RVs, trailer homes and manufactured housing are unsafe during high winds — plan to evacuate to a secure location.
- Shelter-in-place planning
- Prepare to manage without internet, phone service, gas, water and electricity for extended periods.
 - Practice relocating to your designated wind shelter.
 - Identify a small, windowless interior room on the lowest flood-safe floor of a sturdy structure.
 - Recognize that flooding occurs rapidly — have a quick evacuation plan ready.
 - Build a personal support network of individuals who can help you and whom you can assist.
- Communication planning

- Register for free emergency alerts through your local government.
 - Establish how you'll track local news and weather updates.
 - Obtain a backup battery or charging solution for your cell phone.
 - Acquire a battery-operated radio for power outages.
 - Learn alert terminology and appropriate responses:
 - Familiarize yourself with alert types: Hurricane Watch and Warning, Tropical Storm Watch and Warning, Extreme Wind Warning, Storm Surge Watch and Warning, Flash Flood Watch and Warning, Flood Watch and Warning, Tornado Watch and Warning. In short:
 - WATCH: Be prepared!
 - WARNING: Take action!
- Learn emergency skills**
- Complete First Aid and CPR training.
 - Prepare for utility disruptions — plan for power needs including medical equipment and cell phones.



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HURRICANE SAFETY TIPS

• Consult your electrician about backup power requirements.

GATHER EMERGENCY SUPPLIES**Food**

- Water (1 gallon per person per day)
- Nonperishable packaged or canned food and beverages (at least 10 days)
- Snack foods
- Juices
- Baby food
- Special dietary items
- Non-electric can opener
- Paper plates
- Napkins
- Plastic cups
- Utensils (scissors, bottle opener, corkscrew, knife)
- Charcoal or propane grill
- Grill tools
- Charcoal or full propane tank

Medications and medical supplies

- Stock a one-month minimum supply of medication
- Regularly used medical supplies
- List of allergies
- List of the style, serial number and manufacturer information of required medical devices
- Information about where you receive medication, the name of the drug and dosage

First Aid Kit

- First aid manual
- Sterile adhesive bandages of different sizes
- Sterile gauze pads
- Hypoallergenic adhesive tape

- Triangular bandages
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Sewing needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Disinfectant wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Thermometer
- Tube of petroleum jelly
- Safety pins
- Soap
- Latex gloves
- Sunscreen
- Aspirin or other pain reliever
- Anti-diarrheal medicine
- Antacid
- Laxative
- Cotton balls
- Q-tips

Specialty Items

- Specialty items for infants, small children, the elderly and family members with disabilities
- Battery-powered fans, both desk/floor and handheld
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children
- Gasoline or generator (follow storage guidelines in manufacturer's manual)
- Carbon monoxide alarm
- Heavy-duty gloves for handling debris
- Insect bite treatment and bug spray
- Bleach
- Emergency whistles
- Lighters and/or matches
- Coolers and freezer packs
- Protective gear and battery/gas-powered chainsaw
- Two-way radios and NOAA

weather radio

- Portable tool kit (or at least a hammer, screwdriver (flathead and Phillips), adjustable joint wrench and regular and needle-nose pliers)
- Gallon jugs for storing water to flush commodes
- Sunscreen
- Inflatable mattresses, pillows, blankets

Pet Supplies

- Pet food and water to last at least two weeks
- Proper identification
- Medical records/microchip information
- Carrier or cage
- Muzzle and leash
- Water and food bowls
- Medications
- Stock training pads
- Service animal I.D., veterinary records and proof of ownership
- Supplies for your service animal
- Make copies of current licenses/vaccines and store in container
- Place animals in crates with rawhide bones and toys during and following the storm
- Restrain pets using a leash or harness when appropriate
- Stock puppy training pads
- Obtain collapsible pet carriers to use in hotels, shelters or for evacuation

Supply Organization

- Assemble food, water and medications (stores and pharmacies may be inaccessible).
- Create a Go-Kit: minimum 3-day portable supply with

device chargers and backup batteries of varying sizes (cell phone, CPAP, wheelchair, etc.).

- Create a Stay-at-Home Kit: minimum two-week supply.
- Stock a one-month medication supply in child-resistant containers plus medical supplies/equipment.

- Secure personal, financial and medical records (hard copies or secure digital backup)

- Prepare a wallet card listing all medications and dosages.

Last-Minute Tasks

- Disable icemaker and clear ice bin.
- Adjust freezer and refrigerator to coldest temperature settings.
- Fill bathtubs with water (for non-drinking purposes).
- Set HVAC to maximum cooling (remember to switch AC off if power fails).
- Charge all electronic devices.
- In a power outage, unplug TV and other electronic devices.

PROTECT YOUR HOME**Wind Protection**

- Bring indoors or secure outdoor items that could become dangerous projectiles (lawn furniture, trash cans, etc.).
- Anchor items that must remain outside (propane tanks, gas grills).
- Trim or remove trees within falling distance of your home.
- Install permanent storm shutters or protective sheeting on windows.

Flood Protection

- Clear gutters, downspouts and drains.

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HURRICANE SAFETY TIPS

- Stockpile sandbags and plastic sheeting.
- Consider sump pump installation with battery backup.
- Consider elevating your electric panel, water heater and heating system.
- Review insurance coverage with your agent.

DURING THE STORM

MAKE SMART DECISIONS

If evacuation is ordered

- Leave immediately as directed by local authorities.
- Take your Go-Kit.
- Use designated evacuation routes only — shortcuts may be blocked.
- Locate shelters through local officials or the Red Cross Emergency App.

If sheltering during the storm

- Move to a designated storm

shelter or windowless interior room for wind protection.

- Stay away from glass doors and windows.

- Relocate to higher ground before flooding starts.

Flooding safety

- Never walk, swim or drive through floodwater.
- Remember: Turn Around! Don't Drown!

AFTER THE STORM

USE CAUTION

Stay safe

- Wait for official clearance before returning home.
- Stay away from downed wires, fallen power lines and damaged poles — they can cause electrocution.
- Avoid touching floodwaters (they contain sewage, chemicals and bacteria).

- Use battery-powered lanterns or flashlights when power is out to prevent fire risk.

- Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

■ Never use gasoline, charcoal, propane or natural gas devices indoors, in garages, basements, tents, campers or near open windows.

■ Carbon monoxide is invisible and odorless — but deadly. As an extra precaution, invest in a carbon monoxide detector.

■ If you feel weak, dizzy or sick, immediately move to fresh air.

Stay healthy

- Discard any food that became warm or wet ("When in doubt, throw it out!")
- Consult your doctor or health care provider about refrigerated medications.
- Monitor local health depart-

ment announcements regarding drinking water safety.

Clean up safely

- Wear protective gear: boots, goggles and gloves.
- Clean and disinfect all wet items.
- Work with a partner when removing heavy debris.
- Ensure proper training before operating equipment like chainsaws.
- Be aware that heart attacks are a leading post-hurricane cause of death — avoid overexertion.
- Take regular breaks and practice self-care during cleanup.

Take care of yourself

- Recognize that stress, anxiety and difficult emotions are normal responses.
- Maintain healthy eating and adequate sleep to manage stress.

While no amount of preparation can guarantee anyone's safety in a storm, the items on this checklist will, at least,

increase your chances of survival and recovery should a hurricane hit. It's all about stacking the deck when you're up

against the uncertainty of nature.

Keep the odds in your favor. ■

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SWFL SPORTS

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S WEATHER MAKES EVERY SEASON A SPORTS SEASON

BY GLENN MILLER

Florida Weekly Correspondent

Southwest Florida is a sports vacation destination where sporting activity never takes days the day off.

Countless people flock to the region for sports, some as participants and some as spectators. And some, presumably, for both.

Four Major League Baseball teams call the area their spring-training headquarters.

Fans flock to see the 15 big-league teams that train in Florida, with 11 other teams scattered not all that far away from Southwest Florida.

The other 15 big-league teams are very far away, training in Arizona. Spring training's Grapefruit League is a short window of opportunity for local fans and northern tourists as teams play practice

games preparing for the crucible of a 162-game regular season.

In 2025, there were 231 games played in a bit more than a month — Feb. 22 to Mar. 25. Three of the four teams that train in Southwest Florida attracted more than 100,000 in that short time.

The Boston Red Sox attracted 133,881 fans to JetBlue Park in Fort Myers. It's been their home since 2012. They previously played at City of Palms Park in Fort Myers from 1993 to 2011.

The Minnesota Twins attracted 106,836 fans to the Lee Health Sports Complex in Fort Myers. It's been their home since 1991.

The Atlanta Braves had 100,855 fans flock to their home games at CoolToday Park in North Port. Only the Tampa Bay Rays at Charlotte Sports Park failed to crack the 100,000 barrier.

The Rays had 64,395 fans attend their

home games.

Although fans flocked to Southwest Florida spring-training venues and provided boffo box-office numbers that did not translate to banner seasons for the area's four teams.

Three of the four failed to make the Major League Baseball playoffs. The only team to snag a postseason berth was the Red Sox. They were eliminated in the wild-card round by their arch-rivals, the New York Yankees.

The Yankees hold spring training in Tampa.

All those fans at all those games do more than purchase hot dogs from ballpark vendors.

They stay in hotels, dine in restaurants, drink in bars and grab coffee at local coffee shops.

They pay bills and leave tips for servers. It adds up.

JetBlue Park,
Fort Myers



SWFL SPORTS

The Florida Sports Foundation pegs the annual economic impact of spring training on the state at \$687.1 million. That pays for lots of hot dogs.

Many of those fans presumably also spend part of their days as more than spectators.

Maybe they played a round of golf in the morning at a local course or some Pickleball or tennis before heading to one of the local stadiums.

Maybe they headed to a bowling alley after a game or went for an evening run following a game.

Or maybe after a baseball game at Jet-Blue Park or the Lee Health Sports Complex, many fans drove a few miles south to Hertz Arena to see the Florida Everblades of the ECHL, a local minor-league hockey team.

The Everblades averaged 6,578 fans during the 2025-25 season. The Hertz Arena listed capacity is 7,084, so that means the Everblades nearly filled the arena for all the home games.

Joining the Southwest Florida sports lineup earlier this year was professional soccer, FC Naples of the United Soccer League.

In its inaugural season, FC Naples proved there is an appetite for a pro sports team in Collier County. FC Naples averaged 3,558 fans at the Paradise Coast Sports Complex stadium, which has a listed seating capacity of 3,500 with room for more fans on berms.

Just up the road, across the county line, the Everblades and the Fort Myers Mighty Mussels minor-league baseball team of the Florida State League play in



COURTESY PHOTO

Lee County, as do the Red Sox and Twins.

Although it was a rough year on the field for the Mighty Mussels, the franchise has a grand local tradition.

The 2025 Mussels were 52-73. Its 0.416 winning percentage was the worst in the FSL.

But over the years, as the Mussels, or its previous incarnation, the Miracle, the franchise has won championships and produced outstanding players.

Hall of Famers David Ortiz and Joe Mauer played for the Miracle on their respective march through the minor leagues and induction in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

When the franchise was known as "The Miracle," it won FSL titles in 2014

and 2018.

The Everblades have been even more successful, winning the Kelly Cup, emblematic of the ECHL title, in 2012, 2022, 2023 and 2024. The Everblades were also ECHL runner-up in 2004, 2005 and 2018.

The region is also home to three thriving collegiate athletic programs competing at various levels.

Florida Gulf Coast University boasts Division 1 teams in 15 sports.

The most successful program at the Lee County school is women's basketball, which has won 12 Atlantic Sun Conference championships since 2012. The school's basketball and volleyball teams play home games and matches in 4,500-seat Alico Arena, an on-campus facility.

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SWFL SPORTS



FGCU's Tishara Morehouse

COURTESY PHOTO

Florida SouthWestern State College is a JUCO powerhouse winning conference and national championships in various sports. The Bucs field five teams and play home volleyball and basketball games in a 3,500-seat on-campus facility, Suncoast Credit Union Arena.

As autumn began, the volleyball team, coming off three successive national championships, was ranked No. 1 in the national poll.

Down in Collier County, Ave Maria University plays in 24 sports in NAIA competition. In addition to the usual sports such as football, basketball and indoor volleyball, the Gyrenes have teams in Pickleball, dance and beach volleyball.



Marek Houston at bat for the Mighty Mussels.

COURTESY PHOTO

Speaking of Pickleball ... a short drive from Ave Maria in Collier County is the site of the Minto U.S. Open Pickleball championships, which are held every spring.

The event website touts it as "The Biggest Pickleball Party in the World!"

The 2025 Open attracted 3,450 players who participated in 5,600 matches. About 55,000 spectators watched the games at the USOP National Pickleball Center at the East Naples Community Park.

That's quite a party, indeed.

Naples is also home to the Chubb Classic, a stop on the PGA Tour, which was

once known as the Senior PGA Tour and Champions Tour.

By whatever its name, it has become a Collier County fixture since it was launched in 1988. The event has been played at several Collier County courses, but has been at the Tiburon Golf Club since 2021.

Whatever the sport, whether it's golf, pickleball, baseball or volleyball, Southwest Florida remains a prime sports destination.

With abundant sunshine and 12 months of warm weather, Southwest Florida is essentially a non-stop sports party. ■

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■ **At Home** (monthly on the first Thursday) – Charlotte County's guide to everything about the home.

■ **Healthy Body** (monthly on the third Thursday) – Charlotte County's guide to your health.

■ **Health Trends featuring Best Doctors** (January) – A comprehensive guide to doctors and medical services in Southwest Florida.

■ **Destination SWFL** (March) – All about the region's communities, attractions, shopping and events to make a visit the best it can be. We also share some insider secrets to help visitors and new residents experience SWFL like a local.

■ **Arts Preview** (November and February) – Our definitive guide to what's coming up in theater, music,

festivals and more.

■ **Florida Weekly's Best** (May) – Florida Weekly's intrepid writers and editors scour South Florida looking for the best of everything and bestow dozens of Flamingo awards.

■ **Pet Lovers** (July) – A salute to our furry companions.

■ **Businesses of Distinction** (September or October depending on market) – Our nod to the local business community.

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239-343-5437

LEE COUNTY

Cape Coral Hospital

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Gulf Coast Medical Center

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HEALTH CARE

HealthPark Medical Center

This major hospital anchors the HealthPark campus, offering advanced cardiac, surgical, intensive care and women's care services.

9981 South HealthPark Drive, Fort Myers
239-343-5000

Lee Memorial Hospital

Lee County's historic medical center offers comprehensive emergency, trauma, inpatient and diagnostic services in central Fort Myers.

2776 Cleveland Ave., Fort Myers
239-343-2000

Rehabilitation Hospital

The Rehabilitation Hospital provides specialized inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation programs for patients recovering from illness, injury or surgery.

2776 Cleveland Ave., Fort Myers
239-343-3900

Lehigh Regional Medical Center

Operated by Prime Healthcare Services, this community hospital serves eastern Lee County, providing emergency, surgical and medical care.

1500 Lee Blvd., Lehigh Acres
239-369-2101

COLLIER COUNTY

NCH Baker Hospital Downtown

Located near downtown Naples, this flagship hospital of NCH Healthcare System offers advanced cardiac, orthopedic and emergency care.

350 7th St. N., Naples
239-624-5000

NCH North Naples Hospital

This modern facility provides comprehensive inpatient, surgical and diagnostic services for northern Collier County.

11190 Health Park Blvd., Naples
239-624-5000

Physicians Regional Medical Center**– Collier Boulevard**

Part of Physicians Regional Healthcare

System, this medical center offers emergency, surgical and orthopedic services in East Naples.

8300 Collier Blvd., Naples
239-354-6000

Physicians Regional Medical Center – Pine Ridge

The Pine Ridge location features 24-hour emergency care, surgical suites and cardiovascular services, serving central Naples and its surrounding areas.

6101 Pine Ridge Road, Naples
239-348-4000

Physicians Regional Medical Center – North

This smaller campus offers outpatient, imaging, and specialty physician services to North Naples residents.

1285 Creekside Blvd., Naples
239-260-6631

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

ShorePoint Health Port Charlotte

This acute care hospital offers a wide range of medical, surgical and emergency services for mid-Charlotte County.

2500 Harbour Blvd., Port Charlotte
941-766-4122

ShorePoint Health Punta Gorda

Serving southern Charlotte County, the hospital features emergency, orthopedic and rehabilitation care.

809 East Marion Ave., Punta Gorda
941-639-3131

HCA Florida Englewood Hospital

Part of HCA Florida Healthcare, this facility provides emergency, cardiovascular and orthopedic services for Englewood and western Charlotte County.

700 Medical Blvd., Englewood
941-475-6571

HCA Florida Fawcett Hospital

Known for its cardiac, orthopedic and spine programs, this full-service hospital serves the greater Port Charlotte area.

21298 Olean Blvd., Port Charlotte
941-629-1181

Specialty, Urgent and Community Care

Southwest Florida offers numerous urgent care centers and specialty clinics. Lee Health Urgent Care, NCH Immediate Care and Millennium Physician Group clinics provide same-day appointments and walk-in treatment for minor illnesses and injuries. Specialty facilities include the Lee Health Cancer Institute, NCH Heart Institute and Golisano Children's Pediatric Specialty Clinics, all offering advanced, patient-centered services.

Behavioral Health, Hospice and Senior Services

Behavioral and mental health care are available through the David Lawrence Centers for Behavioral Health in Naples, Salus-Care in Fort Myers and Charlotte Behavioral Health Care in Punta Gorda. For end-of-life and palliative care, Hope Hospice and Avow Hospice provide compassionate services across the tri-county region. Senior and rehabilitation options include Moorings Park, Shell Point Retirement Community and multiple outpatient therapy centers.

Veterans and Public Health Services

Veterans can access primary and specialty care through the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System, which has clinics located in Cape Coral, Naples and Port Charlotte. County health departments in Lee, Collier and Charlotte offer vaccinations, wellness programs, family planning and environmental health services to residents, regardless of income.

At a Glance

Emergency: Dial 911
Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222
Lee Health TeleHealth: 239-343-2222
NCH Virtual Care: 239-624-5000
Hope Hospice: 239-482-4673

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SWFL TOP 75 EMPLOYERS

NAME	EMPLOYEES	NAME	EMPLOYEES	NAME	EMPLOYEES	NAME	EMPLOYEES
1 Lee Memorial Health System	13,558	18 Florida Gulf Coast University	1,778	38 US Sugar	843	57 Fifth Third Bank	603
2 Lee County Public Schools	11,174	19 Home Depot	1,770	39 Marriott International, Inc.	833	58 Outback Steakhouse	602
3 Lee County Local Government	9,377	20 Walgreens	1,440	40 Subway	828	59 Lowes Home Improvement	588
4 Publix Super Market	9,362	21 Shell Point Retirement Community	1,401	41 Dillard's	826	60 Bonita Bay Club	579
5 Collier County Public Schools	5,810	22 Radiology Regional Center	1,377	42 Salus Care	811	61 Wendy's	579
6 Collier County Local Government	5,045	23 Bayfront Health	1,342	43 Bank of America	806	62 Dunkin'	578
7 Arthrex	3,983	24 Florida SouthWestern State College	1,245	44 Burger King	774	63 B&I Contractors Inc.	550
8 Chicos Fas Inc.	3,903	25 HCA Florida Fawcett Hospital	1,162	45 Downing-Frye Realty Inc.	767	64 Winzer Co.	550
9 Walmart	3,689	26 CVS Pharmacy	1,100	46 Wells Fargo Bank	738	65 Chase	525
10 NCH Healthcare System	3,288	27 Winn-Dixie	1,098	47 News-Press	730	66 Whole Foods Market	518
11 Charlotte County Local Government	2,655	28 Hertz	1,073	48 7-Eleven	723	67 Starbucks	507
12 Herc Rentals	2,400	29 Ace Hardware	1,048	49 Hendry County Local Government	718	68 Florida Cancer Specialists	505
13 Charlotte Country Public Schools	2,333	30 Hope Hospice	1,035	50 Heartland Health Care Center Fort Myers	707	69 Labcorp	502
14 Amazon	2,200	31 Millennium Physician Group	1,021	51 Community Health Systems Inc.	700	70 Century 21 Real Estate	498
15 Gartner	2,100	32 Truist Financial	1,019	52 Moorings Park	697	71 J&K Southwest Florida Enterprises LLC	497
16 Gargiulo	2,082	33 Hendry County Public Schools	989	53 Lee County Electric Co-op	687	72 Team Enterprise	495
17 McDonald's	2,065	34 South Seas Island Resort	980	54 Family Health Centers of Southwest Florida	644	73 Chili's	494
		35 Walsh Group	971	55 U-Haul	641	74 Vi at Bentley Village	494
		36 Suncoast Credit Union	908	56 WCI Communities	633	75 R&R Harvesting	477
		37 Pacific Tomato Growers	872				

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COLLIER COUNTY

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505 Barefoot Beach Blvd., Naples
239-252-4000

Big Cypress National Preserve

Big Cypress National Preserve spans 730,000 acres of untamed wilderness, located just north of the Everglades. Home to panthers, herons, cypress glens, sawgrass plains and the elusive ghost orchid, Big Cypress became one of the first national preserves in 1974. Twelve campgrounds and hiking opportunities along the Florida National Scenic Trail attract over 3 million visitors every year. The preserve offers ranger-led excursions including swamp walks, kayaking, hiking and a Night-Sky program. In 2016, Big Cypress National Preserve was designated as the first International Dark Sky Park, for its dedication to protecting its night skies from artificial light pollution.

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Clam Pass Park

Hidden from view and accessible by tram or by foot along a three-quarter-mile boardwalk that winds through mangroves, Clam Pass Park is a perfect playground for families and nature lovers. The park features a wide, unspoiled beach and many amenities, including wheelchairs, bike racks, showers, a complimentary tram service, educational nature walks, life jackets, parking booth, onsite dining and restroom facilities.

465 Seagate Dr., Naples
239-252-4000

Collier-Seminole State Park

Collier-Seminole State Park offers a window into the natural and cultural history of Southwest Florida. Once part of the original route planned

Marco Island Sunset



SWFL BEACHES, PARKS AND PRESERVES

for the Tamiami Trail, the park now preserves 7,271 acres of mangroves, cypress swamps and rare royal palm hammocks. Visitors can enjoy activities including camping, canoeing and hiking. Educational programs run from December through March to teach visitors about the natural and historical significance of the park.

20200 Tamiami Trail E, Naples
239-394-3397

Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park

Consistently ranked among Florida's best beaches, Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park spans 166 acres and is a favorite spot for swimmers, shell collectors, fishermen and bird watchers. The mile-long stretch of sandy beach is a perfect spot to sunbathe. Amenities include beach wheelchairs, shuttle service and an accessible boat launch area into Turkey Bay.

11135 Gulfshore Dr., Naples
239-597-6196

**Everglades National Park
(Gulf Coast Visitor Center)**

Everglades National Park spans the southern tip of Florida, protecting more than 1.5 million acres of Florida's subtropical ecosystem that is unique to any other in the world. Endangered species, such as the Florida panther, American crocodile and manatee, make the park their home. Boat tours of Ten Thousand Islands depart from Everglades City, taking visitors to explore the mangrove islands and catch a glimpse of the park's abundant array of wildlife.

815 Oyster Bar Ln., Everglades City
239-695-3311

**Florida Panther
National Wildlife Refuge**

The Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, located east of Naples along Alligator Alley, protects nearly 27,000 acres of the endangered Florida panther habitat. The refuge features two scenic hiking trails that

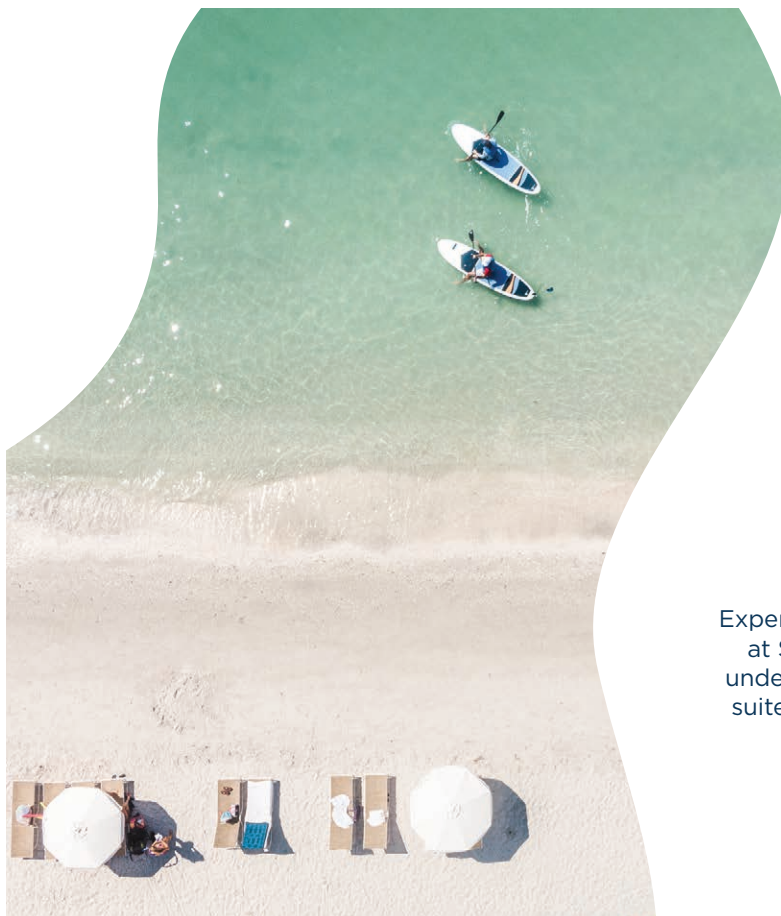
offer a glimpse into a wilderness of cypress domes, pine flatwoods and hardwood hammocks. Spotting one of the big cats is unlikely, but visitors can look out for the deer, bobcats, black bears and many species of birds that make the preserve their home.

12085 SR 29 S, Immokalee
239-657-8001

**Rookery Bay National Estuarine
Research Reserve**

Just south of Naples is one of the last untouched mangrove estuaries in North America. Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve is a living laboratory spanning 110,000 acres, sheltering dolphins, manatees, sea turtles and hundreds of species of birds. Visitors can kayak through calm backwaters and explore interactive exhibits at the Environmental Learning Center or guided eco-tours. The Environmental Learning Center has a robust offering of classes and activities for all ages.

300 Tower Rd., Naples
239-530-5972

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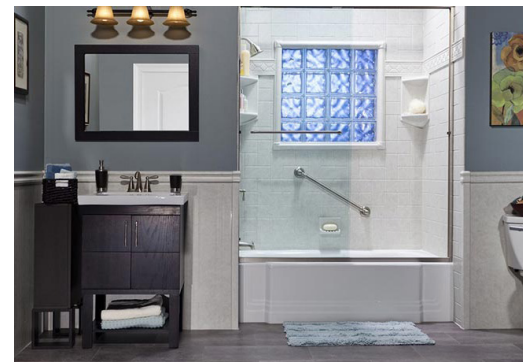
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SWFL BEACHES, PARKS AND PRESERVES

Fred W. Coyle Freedom Park

Freedom Park in Naples is a peaceful oasis spanning 50 acres, located near Golden Gate Parkway. Boardwalks wind through wetlands full of wildlife and native landscaping. The Freedom Memorial, located in the center of the park, honors those who have served and sacrificed for the country. The park is open daily from 8 a.m. to dusk and features free parking and public restrooms.

1515 Golden Gate Pkwy., Naples
239-252-4062

Big Corkscrew Island Regional Park

Set on more than 150 acres in Golden Gate Estates, Big Corkscrew Island Regional Park offers expansive sports fields, walking trails, an aquatic center with slides and a lazy river and a busy community center. Native landscaping and preserved wetlands preserve the character of Collier County while families and children gather to enjoy the park's many outdoor activities.

North Collier Regional Park

Known for its extensive facilities, North Collier Regional Park spans 200 acres and offers a wide range of recreational activities for all ages, including a fossil dig area, playgrounds, Sun-N-Fun Lagoon water park, fitness trails, athletic fields and community and fitness center. The Golisano Children's Museum of Naples is located inside the park, offering educational opportunities for families with young children.

Sugden Regional Park

Sugden Regional Park is one of Collier County's most scenic spots for outdoor recreation and is the only freshwater beachfront park in the county. Visitors come to kayak, sail, paddleboard, or walk around the 60-acre Lake Avalon, located at the center of the park. Amenities include picnic pavilions, a playground and an amphitheater that regularly hosts concerts and community events.

4284 Avalon Dr, Naples
239-252-4000

Lowdermilk Park

Lowdermilk Park is a popular beachfront gathering spot located just north of



Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk

NAPLES, MARCO ISLAND, EVERGLADES CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU COURTESY PHOTO

downtown Naples, featuring soft sand, shaded picnic areas, sand volleyball courts, and a beachfront pavilion. Visitors arrive early to claim a tiki hut and watch dolphins from the shore. The beach is most popular at sunset. It's easy to grab a parking spot and enjoy the simple joys of coastal living.

301 Gulf Shore Blvd. N, Naples
239-213-3029

Tigertail Beach Park

Tigertail Beach on Marco Island begins as a calm lagoon and opens to a wide, white-sand beach along the Gulf that is accessible by crossing a shallow tidal inlet. Getting there is half the fun — it's a long trek from the parking lot — but the journey rewards visitors with glimpses of sand dollars, fiddler crabs and birds before revealing a wide expanse of beach that boasts some of the best shelling and bird-watching in Southwest Florida.

480 Hernando Dr., Marco Island
239-252-4000

Vanderbilt Beach

Vanderbilt Beach is a popular destination for locals seeking to soak up the sun and socialize. Located in North Naples, near upscale hotels, shopping, and dining, "Vandy" entices visitors with its white, sandy beaches and amenities, including

beach wheelchairs, bike racks, and a covered parking garage. During the busy tourist season, it's advisable to arrive before 10 a.m. to grab a parking spot.

100 Vanderbilt Beach Rd., Naples
239-252-4000

South Marco Beach

South Marco Beach is Marco Island's largest public beach access. Wide, sugary white sand meets the Gulf waters and luxury resorts frame the scene. Seashells hide in the dunes and pelicans skim the surface of the Gulf. Nearby parking, restrooms and easy access from Collier Boulevard make South Marco Beach a convenient stop for visitors.

LEE COUNTY

Bunche Beach Preserve

A hidden gem near the Sanibel Causeway, this quiet preserve unfolds across tidal flats, salt marsh, and mangrove shoreline. It's a favorite among birders, photographers, and paddlers who glide across calm shallows at sunrise, when the tide retreats, revealing acres of exposed sand that showcase a living gallery of wading birds and marine life.

18201 John Morris Rd., Fort Myers
239-533-7275

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SWFL BEACHES, PARKS AND PRESERVES

Estero Bay Preserve State Park

Spanning over 10,000 acres of estuary and upland, this preserve protects the delicate ecosystems surrounding Estero Bay. Visitors explore rustic trails, kayak along winding creeks, and observe herons and egrets in an untouched mangrove forest. It's one of Southwest Florida's most tranquil escapes, where the only sound is wind through the reeds.

4940 Broadway W, Estero
239-992-0311

Fort Myers Beach (Central/North)

Stretching along the island's lively northern shoreline, this area blends natural beauty with classic beach-town charm. Families gather at Lynn Hall for picnics and fishing, while Bowditch Point's trails reveal quiet dunes and panoramic Gulf views. It's the heart of Fort Myers Beach — bustling yet still touched by the salt and calm of the sea.

950 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach
239-533-7275

John Yarbrough Linear Park

This 6-mile paved trail parallels the Ten Mile Canal, linking Six Mile Cypress with Colonial Boulevard, passing filter marshes, bridges, benches and habitat views. Ideal for walking, jogging or casual bike rides in a semi-urban natural corridor.

Starts at Six Mile Cypress Pkwy., Fort Myers
239-533-7275

Koreshan State Park

Once home to a utopian pioneer community, Koreshan offers both history and nature along the tranquil Estero River. Visitors explore restored 19th-century structures shaded by bamboo, then rent kayaks or paddleboards to drift through the cypress-lined waterway. With its mix of heritage and wilderness, it feels like stepping back in time.

3800 Corkscrew Rd., Estero
239-992-0311

Lakes Regional Park

A family favorite for generations, this park blends recreation and nature across a network of trails and freshwater lakes. Rent a pedal boat, stroll the Fragrance Garden or visit the miniature train museum that delights visitors of all ages.

7330 Gladiolus Dr., Fort Myers
239-533-7575

Lovers Key State Park

Once accessible only by boat, Lovers Key remains one of Lee County's most striking coastal landscapes. Two miles of white sand beach meet mangrove estuaries teeming with dolphins, manatees, and wading birds. Visitors can hike, paddle or take the tram to one of Florida's most romantic stretches of shoreline.

8700 Estero Blvd., Bonita Springs
239-463-4588

Manatee Park

Each winter, hundreds of manatees gather here to bask in the warm outflow of a nearby power plant — a rare spectacle visible from shaded boardwalks. Educational exhibits explain the gentle mammals' habits and conservation needs. Even outside manatee season, the park's picnic spots and kayak launch make it a serene riverside retreat.

10901 State Road 80, Fort Myers
239-690-5030

Sanibel Lighthouse Beach Park

Anchoring the east end of Sanibel Island, this historic park pairs postcard views with a touch of nostalgia. Visitors stroll beneath the iron lighthouse, cast lines from the pier, or wade through calm surf dotted with shells.

110 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel
239-472-3700

Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve

This 3,500-acre wetland preserve offers a 1.2-mile boardwalk weaving through cypress swamp, upland hammock, and marsh. Interpretive displays, wildlife viewing areas (alligators, birds, turtles), and a nature center deepen the experience.

7751 Penzance Blvd, Fort Myers
239-533-7550

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Cape Haze Pioneer Trail

Stretching 8 miles along a former rail corridor, this multiuse trail connects Port Charlotte south to Placida, passing through wooded sections and open terrain. Popular with cyclists, runners and walkers, it also links to the Boca Grande Bike Path.

Pinedale Drive near Boca Grande Causeway,
Port Charlotte
941-625-7529

Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC / Cedar Point Environmental Park)

CHEC encompasses six miles of marked trails through pine flatwoods, coastal hammocks, wetlands and marshes with picnic areas, interpretive displays and birding opportunities.



Koreshan State Park, Estero

SWFL BEACHES, PARKS AND PRESERVES

Educational programming, guided hikes and seasonal events deepen connection with Charlotte Harbor's ecosystems.

10941 Burnt Store Rd., Punta Gorda
941-575-5435

Don Pedro Island State Park

Reachable only by water, this 129-acre barrier island feels worlds away from the mainland. Visitors find unspoiled beach, winding nature trails and sweeping Gulf views framed by sea oats and mangroves.

8450 Placida Rd. (ferry access), Cape Haze
941-964-0375

Englewood Beach

Known for its soft sand and friendly, low-key atmosphere, Englewood Beach draws both locals and visitors year-round. The boardwalk and shaded shelters make it easy to spend the whole day seaside. Nearby cafés and beach shops keep the casual, small-town coastal vibe alive.

2100 N Beach Rd., Englewood
941-681-3742



PUNTA GORDA/ENGLEWOOD BEACH VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU / COURTESY PHOTO

Four Mile Cove Ecological Preserve

Bordered by canals and mangrove fringe, Four Mile Cove offers boardwalks, kayak launches, hammock trails and a quiet mangrove-lined loop ideal for birding and nature strolls.

2500 SE 24th St., Cape Coral
239-574-0806

Gasparilla Island State Park

At the island's southern tip, this park offers

brilliant turquoise water, sweeping sands and the restored 1890 lighthouse museum. Anglers cast from the pier while beachcombers hunt for shells along the shoreline.

880 Belcher Rd., Boca Grande
941-964-0375

Port Charlotte Beach Park

Overlooking Charlotte Harbor, this community centerpiece combines waterfront leisure with panoramic sunset views. Locals gather for weekend barbecues or to cast lines from the long pier. Between the gentle waves and lively picnic chatter, it captures the spirit of small-town coastal living.

4500 Harbor Blvd., Port Charlotte
941-627-1628

Stump Pass Beach State Park

On southern Manasota Key, this park mixes beach access, dunes and a 1.3-mile nature trail through coastal scrub and mangrove edge. Ranger-led turtle walks and interpretive walks are offered seasonally.

900 Gulf Blvd., Englewood
941-759-2007

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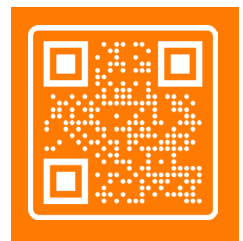
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