



Florida West



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www.Travel-Pix.ca



Florida West

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Florida West

This Florida visit concentrated on the state's Gulf Coast, complementing the 2010 trip which went straight down the Atlantic side.

I was accompanied by a long-time friend from Vancouver on this trip. Chris hadn't been to Miami before, so there was a bit of an overlap with the 2010 tour at the beginning as we visited a few of the highlights there.

Then, after a quick drive across the Everglades, we began our exploration of the Gulf Coast. We visited friends of Chris in Naples, did a few day trips from there, and then headed north.

This was a relatively relaxed trip, with a fairly eclectic mix of sightseeing excursions, ranging from the Ford and Edison Winter Estates in Fort Myers to the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota and the Dali Museum in St. Petersburg.

And we saw a lot of Florida wildlife – in nature preserves and wildlife centres in Naples, on Sanibel Island, in Punta Gorda, and in St. Petersburg.

– Bruce McKay



Florida West

To Miami for a day of sightseeing there.

Across the Everglades to visit friends in Naples and begin exploring the Gulf Coast.

Day trips around Naples and down to Marco Island, and then north in stages, day by day.

Visits to historical sites, wildlife areas, art galleries, museums, and beach communities.

Home from Tampa.



Miami Beach

**November morning. 74° F / 23 C.
No crowds. Paradise.**



Miami Beach

Gorgeous beach. This is the first time in Miami for Chris.



Miami Beach

This is definitely beach territory, but ...



Art Deco District

The big attractions here are the Art Deco hotels, now restored to their 1930s glory.



Art Deco District

The hotels set the style tone for all of South Beach.



Art Deco District

For a complete photo catalog of the architecture,
see pages 144 to 155 of the Florida 2010 PDF.



Art Deco District

Almost everything is here colour coordinated and in fine taste.



**Miami Beach
Sightseeing Cruise**

We're off on a short sightseeing cruise, repeating a 2010 adventure.



Miami Beach
Sightseeing Cruise

Not all of South Beach is 1930s architecture any more.



**Miami Beach
Sightseeing Cruise**

We pass by exclusive Fisher Island, with the highest per capita income of any place in the United States, at a safe distance.



**Miami Beach
Sightseeing Cruise**

**And we see lots of the multi-million dollar estates
for which Miami Beach is famous.**



**Miami Beach
Sightseeing Cruise**

**More estates in Florida 2010 PDF, pages 133 to 143,
if you're interested. We're headed for the Gulf Coast.**



Naples

**We've skipped across the Everglades
to the Gulf of Mexico.**



Naples

Naples Beach Hotel



Naples

Naples Pier



THE NAPLES PIER

Built in 1888 as a freight and passenger dock, the Naples Pier stands as a community landmark. Narrow gauge train rails spanning the length of the pier transported freight and baggage in the early 1900's. Part of the structure as well as the post office located on the pier was razed by fire in 1922. Rebuilt after damage by hurricanes in 1910, 1926, and 1960, it remains a public symbol of the area's history.

ERECTED BY NAPLES CANYON
COOPERATION WITH DEPARTMENT OF STATE



Naples

Naples Pier and shoreline



Naples

Naples recreation



Naples

We've come to Naples to visit Chris's friend Bev, centre, and here we're visiting her friend Kathryn.



Naples

**Kathryn's horses are gorgeous and well behaved.
But we're headed off to the wilds.**

WELCOME TO CORKSCREW SWAMP

Planning Your Visit

Things to See and Do:

- Walk the 2.25 mile-long boardwalk trail exploring six native habitats.
- See the largest remaining stand of old-growth cypress forest.
- Enjoy the Blair Audubon Center with interpretive exhibits, nature store and café.
- Learn from naturalists stationed on the boardwalk.
- Participate in interpretive programs (when available).
- Guided walks and special programs are available by reservation.

Hints and Tips:

- All facilities are handicapped accessible.
- This is a smoke-free center and boardwalk.
- Please bring no food on the boardwalk.
- Please do not use cell phones on the nature trail.
- Picnic area and café available for snacks and meals.
- Plan to spend at least 2.5 hours here.
- Binoculars are available for rent at admission desk.
- Most people don't need mosquito repellent. This isn't a heavy mosquito area.
- Wild animals are sensitive to noise and commotion. Refrain from loud talking and running.
- To protect wildlife, all feeding, bird-calling, fishing, collecting and littering is prohibited.
- Thank you for helping us maintain the wilderness quality of this sanctuary for your enjoyment and that of future generations.

LEGEND:

- BLAIR AUDUBON CENTER
Information • Nature Store • Food Service • Seating
- STUDENT BOARDWALK
(Closed to the General Public)
- RESTROOM
- PONICAREA
- INTERPRETIVE DISPLAYS
- PHOTOAREA
- TRAIL MILEST
- OPTIMAL SCOPERTAIL
OF LETTUCE LAKES
(2000-2007) 10-15-18-21-24



HOURS

Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary
is open to the public from
7:00 am to 5:30 pm daily

ADMISSION

Adults	\$12.00
Audubon Members	\$6.00
College Students	\$6.00
Children (6-18yrs)	\$4.00
Children under 6	Free

This is a non-profit Audubon facility. Admission fees, store sales and donations benefit Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.

**CORKSCREW SWAMP
SANCTUARY &
BLAIR
Audubon
CENTER**

**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary, Naples**

The Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary's 13,000 acres / 5,260 hectares protect the largest remaining stand of Bald Cypress trees in the U.S. from logging.



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

**The Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary is owned and
operated by the National Audubon Society.**



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

The sanctuary includes a variety of ecosystems – pine flatwood, wet prairie, pond cypress, lettuce lakes, bald cypress, and marsh.



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

Pine flatwood gives way to wet prairie.



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

A 2 mile / 3 km boardwalk winds through the sanctuary and provides easy (and dry) access to the various ecosystems.



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

Pond cypress ecosystem



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

Duck weed covers some swamp areas.



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

There are no noises in the swamp. It's extremely peaceful.
Judging by the calls, there are lots of birds, though they are difficult to spot.



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

Pond cypress swamp



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

Anhingas dive for fish, but their wings aren't waterproof so they hang themselves out to dry in the sun.



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

The roots of the Cypress produce a growth called "knees" just above the water line that supply oxygen to the root system.



**Corkscrew Swamp
Sanctuary**

River otter, in its sanctuary.



Marco Island

Most of the coast south of Naples is state or national parkland, but development was permitted on Marco Island.



Marco Island

Marco Island features pleasant residential areas.



Marco Island

Priorities here are divided between land and sea.



**Marco Island
Sightseeing Cruise**

Mangrove trees grow in salt water. Their roots provide a habitat for marine life. Mangrove swamps protect shorelines from erosion.



**Marco Island
Sightseeing Cruise**

**Mangrove roots trap sediments, decaying leaves add particle mass,
and over time a seed can create a mangrove island.**



MANATEE ZONE
30 MPH IN CHANNEL
SLOW SPEED OUT
OF CHANNEL

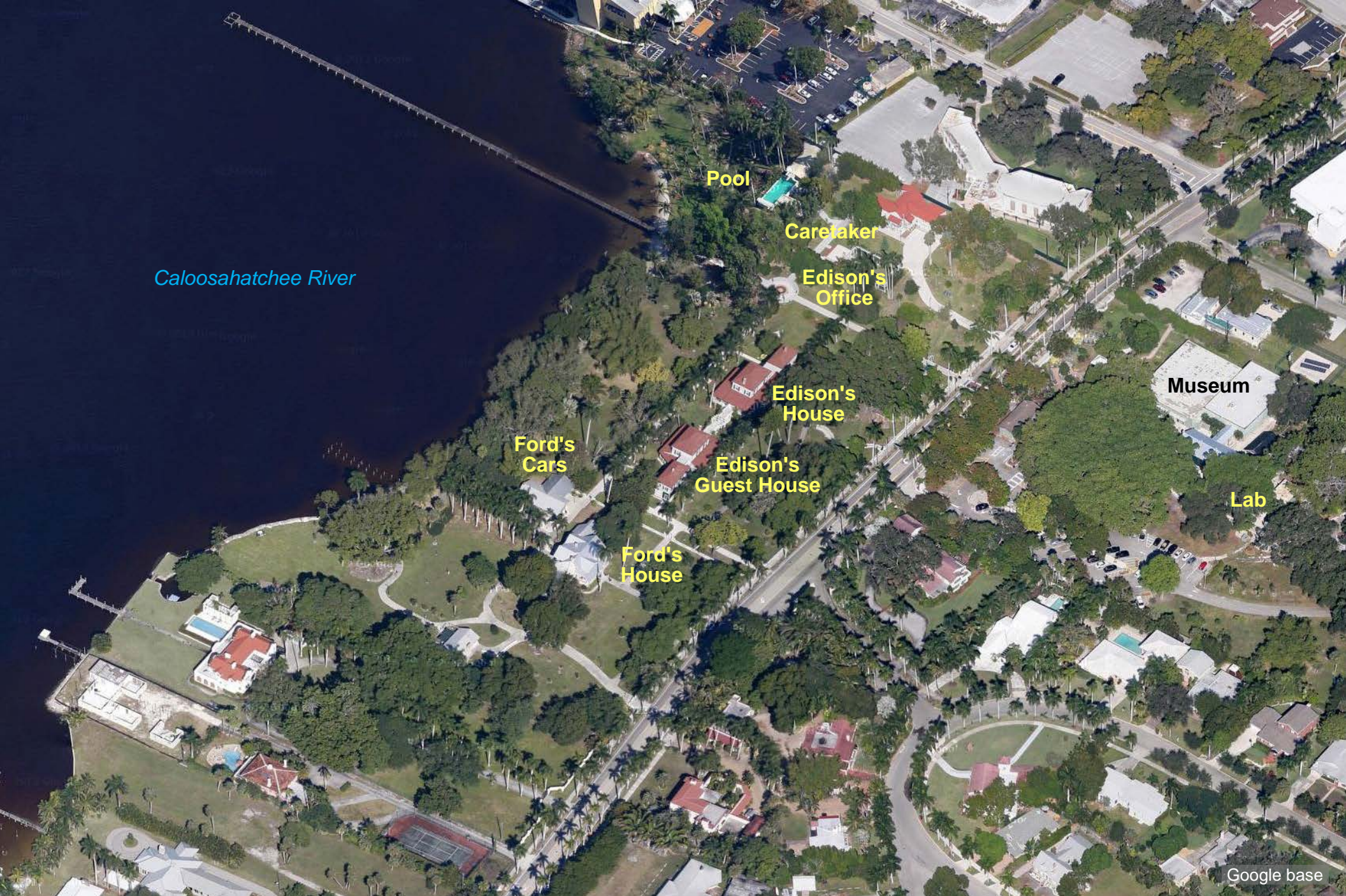
Marco Island
Sightseeing Cruise

We see a few birds ...



**Marco Island
Sightseeing Cruise**

... but only glimpse one porpoise.



**Edison & Ford
Estates, Ft. Myers**

Thomas Edison purchased riverfront property in Fort Myers in 1885 and developed it into a combination vacation and business development estate.



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

Fort Myers was the perfect winter retreat location for Edison.



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

The grounds feature a mixture of native trees and others imported for Edison's rubber development project.



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

Edison's Main House



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

**Edison's Main House.
Preparations for Christmas were underway when we visited.**



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

**Edison's Main House.
Furnished as of the early 1930s.**



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

Edison's Den in his Main House



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

Edison's Guest House



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

Edison's Office



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

Henry Ford, a good friend of Edison's, purchased a neighbouring home in 1916 so that they and their families could vacation together.



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

Henry Ford's Winter House



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

Early Ford cars are housed in Henry's vacation garage.



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

This 1928 lab was part of Edison, Ford, and Harvey Firestone's project to develop a quick-growing domestic source of natural rubber.



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

The lab was operational until 1936,
five years after Edison's death.



**Edison & Ford
Estates**

The project was not able to produce rubber on a large enough scale to make it commercially feasible.



Sanibel Island

Sanibel is a barrier island in the Gulf, just offshore from Fort Myers.



Sanibel Island

It's a popular destination known for its shell beaches and wildlife refuges.



Sanibel Island

The Sanibel Island Light is an iron structure completed in 1884. It is the first lighthouse on the Gulf coast north of Key West.



Sanibel Island

**More than half the island is made up of wildlife refuges.
The Darling National Wildlife Refuge is the largest.**



Sanibel Island

Pelicans, herons, egrets, and anhingas are common sights here.



Sanibel Island

Great egret



Sanibel Island

I catch an egret taking off ...



Sanibel Island

... and in flight.



Sanibel Island

Shore birds include sandpipers, terns, and seagulls.



**Sanibel Island
Sunset**



**Sanibel Island
Sunset**



**Sanibel Island
Sunset**



Fort Myers Beach



Fort Myers Beach



**Ponce de Leon Park
Punta Gorda**

Juan Ponce de León was the first Spanish explorer to arrive in Florida, probably in 1460. This plaque commemorates his 1513 visit to the Punta Gorda area.



Ponce de Leon
Park

His 1513 visit was marred by a conflict with the natives that left one of his men and several Indians dead. The first event in a long and tragic history.



**Peace River Wildlife
Center, Punta Gorda**

The Peace River Wildlife Center treats and rehabilitates injured and orphaned native Florida wildlife and, if possible, returns them to the wild.



**Peace River
Wildlife Center**

Some of the released birds come back to the open areas from time to time, to visit and for free meals.



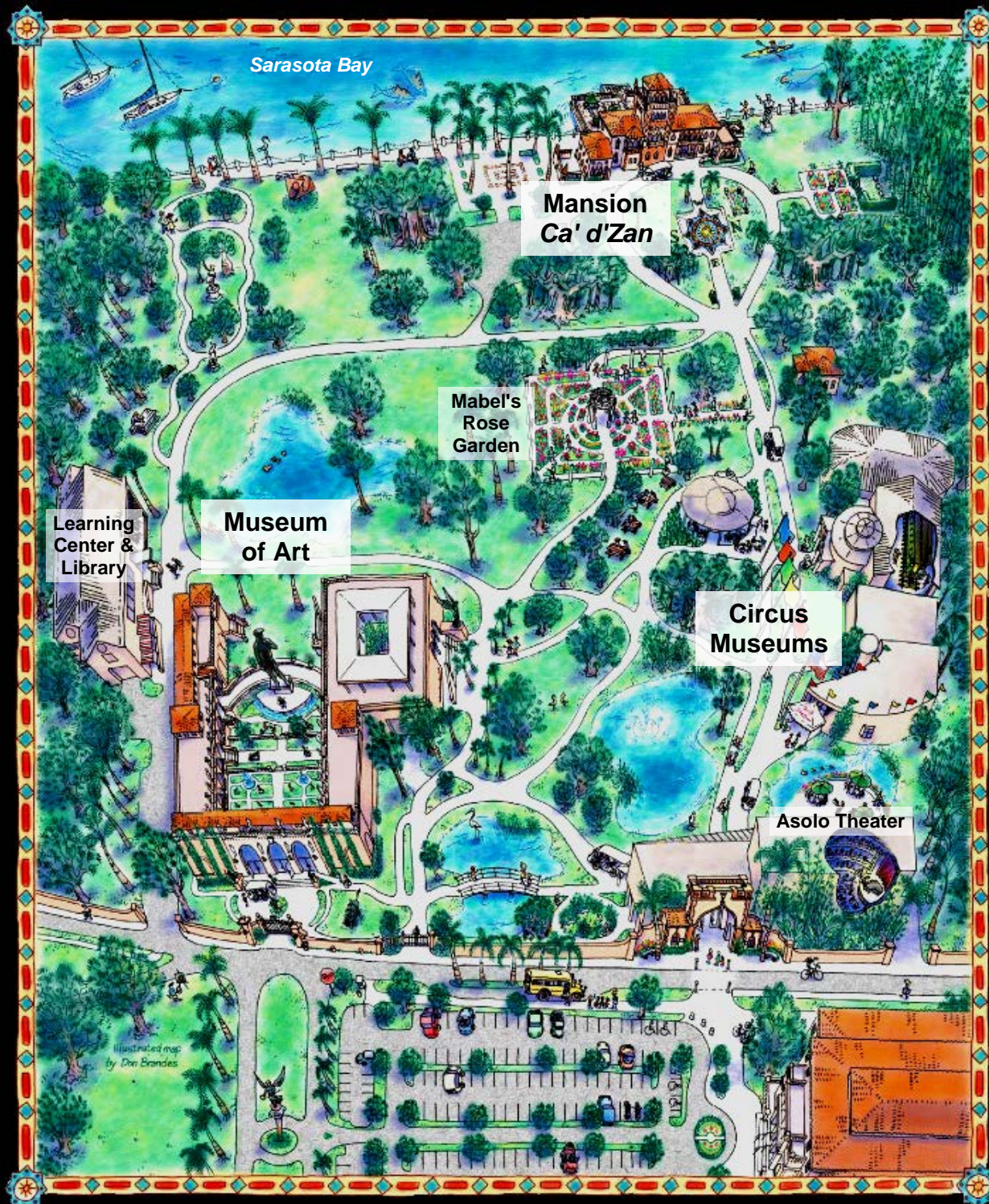
Peace River
Wildlife Center

Brown Pelican



Peace River
Wildlife Center

White Ibis



John and Mabel Ringling Estate and Museums

Sarasota

John Ringling shared management of the successful Ringling Brothers Circus with his brothers in the early 1900s, but assumed the lead role by the mid 1920s.

The Ringling Estate of John and Mabel encompasses 66 acres / 27 hectares fronting on Sarasota Bay.

The Estate includes the Ringling Mansion (*Ca' d'Zan*), the Museum of Art, the Circus Museum, the Asolo Theater, and extensive formal gardens.

The Ringlings bequeathed the Estate to the State of Florida, which incorporated it into Florida State University in 2000.



**Ringling Circus
Museum**

We begin in the Circus Museum because it holds clues to the financial success which made the rest of the Estate possible.



**Ringling Circus
Museum**

The Circus Museum houses some of the more unique items featured in the Ringling Brothers Circus, such as this repeating human cannon.



**Ringling Circus
Museum**

**And it houses some of the colourful parade wagons
which gave the circus its unique identity.**



**Ringling Circus
Museum**

But a great deal of the Circus Museum is devoted to the circus trains which were key to the growth and profitability of the Ringling Circus.



**Ringling Circus
Museum**

**This is a small part of the largest miniature circus in the world,
which occupies 3,800 sq. ft. / 353 m² in the Circus Museum.**



**Ringling Circus
Museum**

The "Howard Bros." circus model accurately depicts the Ringling Bros. circus as it travelled by train in its heyday in the 1920s and 30s.



**Ringling Circus
Museum**

The railroad made it possible for the circus to travel efficiently all across America, bringing the circus to cities and towns, both large and small.



Ringling Circus
Museum

Techniques were developed for loading circus wagons
onto railway flatcars for quick trips between towns.



**Ringling Circus
Museum**

The circus model includes 57 train cars, 152 wagons,
800 animals, 1,300 circus performers and workers ...



Ringling Circus
Museum

... and eight main tents.
This one is totally animated, with moving acrobats, animals, and clowns.



Ringling Circus
Museum

John and Mabel Ringling travelled across the country in style
in this private Pullman coach, *The Wisconsin*.



**Ringling Circus
Museum**

Interior of the Observation Room of *The Wisconsin*. The car also contains three bedrooms, a dining room, kitchen, bathroom, and servants' quarters.



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

John and Mabel Ringling built their palatial 56-room mansion on Sarasota Bay between 1924 and 1926.



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

The Ringlings travelled extensively in Europe, searching out acts and ideas for their circus, and fell in love with Mediterranean architecture.



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

The mansion combines the grandeur of the Doge's Palace and the gothic grace of the Ca' d'Oro (golden house) in Venice ...



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

... with Sarasota Bay serving as the Grand Canal.
Ca' d'Zan means "House of John" in Venetian dialect.



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

The bayfront terrace is made of domestic and imported marble.



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

Mabel Ringling collected post cards and photos on her European travels to aid the architect with his design.



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

The pinnacle of the structure is the 81-foot / 25 m Belvedere tower, with an open-air overlook and a high domed ceiling.



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

The living room was designed and furnished for entertaining on a grand scale, and hosted political and entertainment industry celebrities.



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

A six-year \$15 million restoration completed in 2002 returned the mansion to its original glory.



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

Tap Room



Ringling Mansion
Ca' d'Zan

Subtle reminder of the circus origins of all this.



**Ringling Museum
of Art**

In 1925 Ringling engaged an architect to design an art museum in Renaissance style with graceful colonnades opening onto an Italianate garden.



**Ringling Museum
of Art**

The Museum opened to the public in 1931, showcasing the Ringlings' personal collection of European masterpieces.



**Ringling Museum
of Art**

The courtyard features a reproduction of Michelangelo's *David*, and the galleries include works by masters such as Rubens, van Dyck, and Gainsborough.



Ringling Museum
of Art

The Triumph of Divine Love, c1625, Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577-1640).
Large oils-on-canvas by Rubens have pride of place in the galleries.



Ringling Museum
of Art

The Four Evangelists, c1625, Rubens.

(Ringling is one of very few galleries permitting photography.)



Ringling Museum
of Art

The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek, c1625, Rubens.
(#3 of 6 European painting examples.)



Small informational text label to the right of the painting.



Jan Looten
Hunters in a Forest Landscape
c. 1650-1660
Oil on canvas



Lottery Drawing in Piazza Delle Erbe, Turin, Giovanni Michele Granieri (Italian, 1736-59)



Ringling Museum
of Art

The oldest French harpsichord in the world, by Claude Jacquet of Paris, 1652.
Back: *Arcadian Landscapes*, c1800, Jurian Andriessen (Dutch, 1749-1819).



Ringling Museum
of Art

German Silver Travelling Set, Augsburg, c1755.
Personal accessories to take on the Grand Tour of Europe. Grand Tour indeed.



Treasure Island

**Sunset at Treasure Island,
just west of St. Petersburg.**



Treasure Island



Dali Museum
St. Petersburg

The Dali Museum in St. Petersburg houses the largest collection of works by Salvador Dali outside of Spain.



Dali Museum

The new museum building, opened in 2011, was designed to protect the collection, all housed on an upper level, from hurricanes and floods.



Dali Museum

In tribute to Dali, the architecture of both the exterior and interior combines the rational with the fantastical.



Dali Museum

Photography is not permitted in the Dali Museum galleries,
but the building provides a great view across Tampa Bay.



Dali Museum

St. Petersburg



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

**The Boyd Hill Nature Preserve is a 245 acre / 100 hectare wilderness oasis
on Lake Maggiore, right in the middle of urban St. Petersburg.**



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

The preserve includes five ecosystems – hardwood hammocks, sand pine scrub, pine flatwoods, willow marsh, and lake shore.



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

**We were fortunate to arrive just in time for the
daily tram tour conducted by a staff ranger.**



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

Spanish moss is a flowering plant (not a moss) that grows on larger trees like Live Oak, slowing growth somewhat by competing for sunlight.



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

Gopher tortoises are a threatened "keystone" species whose burrows provide refuge for over 300 other species.



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

**Florida hosts several species of
orange and sulphur butterflies.**



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

**Moorhens prefer shallow vegetated lakes. Water lilies are ideal.
The Boyd Hill Preserve is part of the Great Florida Birding Trail.**



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

**Cormorants can dive to considerable depths,
but often feed in shallow water.**



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

Aningas cannot waterproof their wings so are barely buoyant, but this allows them to dive easily and stay down for significant periods.



Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve

Anhinga surfacing



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

**Kestrels are part of the falcon family, and usually
hunt small mammals, lizards, or large insects.**



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

**We never would have spotted this alligator catching
some rays if Andrea, our guide, hadn't pointed it out.**



**Boyd Hill Nature
Preserve**

**Have a nice afternoon.
We'll leave you in peace.**



Clearwater Beach

Gulf beach island community,
just west of Clearwater and Tampa.



Clearwater Beach

**Home from Tampa tomorrow,
leaving the pleasant weather behind.**

< End >

 **Florida West**