

## DESTINATIONS

## So fine SoFi

By Libby Boren McMillan

Photos courtesy of The Bentley Beach Hotel

South of fifth is the new place to be on Miami's sophisticated South Beach. You'll find the Bentley Beach Hotel at the subtle, luxurious heart of it all



*The Bentley Beach Hotel lobby*

stunning views of the Atlantic, the Deco District and cruise ships heading out to sea.

Many suites include outdoor terraces, but it might take a little effort to work your way outdoors. All accommodations are appointed with custom-made European furnishings, laptop-compatible safes, plasma or flat-screen TVs and home theater systems, wireless high-speed Internet and cordless phones. You'll also find all the goodies you expect from a world-class hotel: Egyptian bed linens; marble bathroom with Jacuzzi soaking tub, oversized glass shower (with view!), bidet and bathrobes; a four-star honor bar and fully equipped kitchen or kitchenette. A small pet is welcome to join you for \$50 per day

## TOP SHELF

If your goal is to woo someone special, impress a client or simply to treat yourself to the best of the Beach, get thee to the Bentley Beach Hotel penthouse.

Perhaps SoFi's most glamorous setting, the 3,500-square-foot penthouse opens onto expansive oceanfront terraces, each with a jaw-dropping vista. (When Jamie Foxx lived here for a month ▶

Miami's South Beach has long been a mecca for trendy hotels, late-night partying, sophisticated shopping and celebrity spotting. But now a right-hand turn on Ocean Drive delivers you to the newest hot pocket of South Beach: SoFi (south of Fifth). More luxurious and far less crowded than the Ocean Drive/Collins Avenue scene, SoFi (pronounced SO-fee) is peppered with hot restaurants and cool shops. Work on countless new developments makes for a little extra noise, but travelers checking into the luxe boutique-style Bentley Beach Hotel will be more than compensated with uncompromising quality and convenience. (Do ask for the south side of the hotel). This sparkling property, a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, impresses from the moment one enters its marble-floored lobby.

Italian-designed and state-of-the-art, studios and suites at the Bentley Beach also sport marble floors. Floor-to-ceiling windows frame



*The fourth story of the Bentley Beach Hotel*

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*Oceanfront suites at the Bentley Beach Hotel, like this one at nearly 800 square feet, boast spacious terraces, flat-screen TVs, lavish marble bathrooms and spectacular views.*

during the filming of "Miami Vice" the movie, no doubt he was a regular on the private rooftop terrace, a penthouse bonus with Jacuzzi pool overlooking the sea.)

Whether your trip is business or pleasure, try to make time to visit the hotel's Caroli Health Club and Spa, the first of its kind in the United States. Scheduled to open mid-year, this Italian-style oasis of tranquility is being modeled on 13 Caroli spas in Milano, Cortina, Lagonissi, Athens, London and elsewhere in Europe.

In Rocco Donna salon, celebrity stylist Leonardo Rocco of Argentina and Europe works side by side with his team to offer hotel guests the latest in hairstyles and color, extensions, spa manicures, pedicures and makeup. Start with champagne in the VIP room and see where your consultation leads. While the spa, salon and suites ►



*Bentley beachgoers can relax in shaded cabanas or sexy beach beds.*

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The split-level rooftop terrace of the 3,500-square-foot, two-bedroom Bentley Beach penthouse

breezes, or in a romantic garden. Madonna, Lenny Kravitz and Usher have already sampled its seafood and New American fare.

For those who plan special hotel stays around events requiring tickets, the Bentley Beach is just minutes from Jackie Gleason Theater, the Miami Beach Convention Center and American Airlines Arena. Several late-night clubs are within walking distance of the hotel.

If live music is your thing, a one-mile cab ride puts you on Lincoln Road. (See our sidebar for entertainment and dining in the area).

Shoppers have no shortage of alluring options in the countless stores and boutiques adorning trendy South Beach streets, and business travelers will revel in the short hop to Brickell Avenue and Coral Gables.

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

Last year's \$18,000 "Miami Vice" package at the Bentley Beach — which included a penthouse stay, boat and Ferrari rentals plus assorted other VIP luxuries — piques our curiosity. What will this new SoFi star come up with next?

One thing's certain ... it will be tempting. ☺

— The Bentley Beach Hotel, 101 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach. Nightly rates \$199 to \$2,000; packages also available. Call (866) 236-8539 or (305) 938-4600, or visit [www.thebentleybeachhotel.com](http://www.thebentleybeachhotel.com).

are perfect enough to inspire near-reclusive behavior, guests who force themselves to explore will discover the Bentley Beach Hotel's infinity pool, two beautiful spa tubs (outdoors on the fourth floor), a fitness center oceanfront jogging circuits, full-service private beach club, personal watercraft and parasailing.

**LOCATION, LOCATION**

Walk a block from the hotel, and the world is your oyster. Give in to old habits with a meal at Joe's Stone Crab, a South Beach institution. Nearby Nemo is our favorite setting for romance or relaxed dining; its enticing aromas will likely win you over, and you'll have a choice of sexy al fresco seating. You can also ask the Bentley Beach concierge to reserve a table across the street from the hotel at the hotter-than-hot Prime 112, or at nearby sister property The Bentley Hotel, which recently launched its signature restaurant, 510 Ocean.

510 has a choice of ambience: al fresco with ocean

**BEST BETS FOR A PERFECT SOFI EVENING****LIVE JAZZ SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK**

Van Dyke Café  
846 Lincoln Road (at Jefferson)  
(305) 534-3600

Jazz musicians from around the world play this award-winning club and eatery. Intimate setting, great music. Check out Lincoln Road action on the breaks. Find the full schedule at: [www.donwilner.com](http://www.donwilner.com).

**COFFEE, ITALIAN SNACKS & PEOPLE-WATCHING**

Segafredo  
1040 Lincoln Road; (305) 673-0047

Beautiful people, high fashion, celebrities, a multitude of foreign languages and sexy outdoor seating set this European-style caffe bar apart.

**HISTORIC MIAMI DINING**

Joe's Stone Crab  
11 Washington Avenue; (305) 673-0365

Expensive, big as a city block, filled with tuxedoed waiters handing out bibs and recommending Florida stone crabs, hash browns and creamed spinach. You could see anyone here.

**CHARMING ESPANOLA WAY**

North of 14th,  
between Washington and Pennsylvania

The most charming street in South Beach, modeled after a European village and frequented through the years by high society, Al Capone, the "Miami Vice" crew and all manner of Hollywood moviemakers.

Two spots well worth checking out:

Tapas & Tintos, a Spanish bar with live flamenco and tango, and an endless tapas menu; and Hosteria Romana, a delightfully lively I-could-be-in-Italy ristorante.

**DANCE & BEACH CLUB**

Nikki Beach  
1 Ocean Drive (next door to Bentley Beach)  
(305) 538-1111

A white-hot dance club. Don't miss the ultra-hip beach scene, especially at night, with beds, teepees and swaying palms. Above is Pearl, a restaurant and champagne bar with groovy vibe and Atlantic-view balcony.

— Libby Boren McMillan