

TOP FLIGHT



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Atlantic,

Harbour Shops,

Bal Harbour Shops

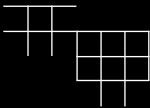
. Missoni, Dolce & Gabbana, Oscar De La Renta, Chloe, Graff, Jimmy Choo, Ralph Lauren, Versace, Silvia Tcherassi, Alexander McQueen, Balenciaga

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Le Zoo, Carpaccio, The Grill at Bal Harbour, Ferrari Bentley, 2012, Unscripted Bal Harbour, Art Access, Art Basel Miami Beach, St. Regis Bal Harbour, friendly, dog, \$35, 700, Pushelberg, Yabu, Ritz Carlton, St. Regis, Bal Harbour Shops, Ritz Carlton, Artisan Beach House, \$3,5, 124, 0 6 5



Alternative Bal Harbor: A Small City of Dreams

Back at the beginning of the last century, here, on the edge of Greater Miami, swamps predominated that teemed with crocodiles and smugglers who carried alcohol across Haulover Inlet in violation of the Prohibition. Today Bal Harbor is one of the most prestigious resorts in the United States.



A small, one square mile with a population of 2,600, Miami's luxurious enclave, renowned for its exclusive hotels, great beaches, trendy boutiques and gourmet restaurants, is located just twenty minutes north of South Beach. However, Bal Harbor is fundamentally different from its "big brother" to the south: it is home to those who live according to the principle "Wealth loves silence" – those who value exclusivity, prestige and complete safety and security.

The construction of this small town on the Atlantic coast began in 1929 on the initiative of the American businessman Robert Graham and was conceived as an association of owners belonging to the upper middle class. The Second World War forced him to change these plans: the patriotic Graham leased the development ar-



ea to the US Air Force for a symbolic fee of 1 dollar a year, and the future Bal Harbor was transformed into a military training camp.

In 1946, the town, created by the design studio of the legendary American urban planner Harland Bartholomew, was finally officially registered. The name Bal is made up of the words Bay and Atlantic, on which the resort is located. It was Stanley Whitman who was largely responsible for turning the town into the city of dreams with his reconstruction of the former military barracks into the Bal Harbor Shops luxury shopping complex, which became the town's entry point to the world of the rich and famous.

Bal Harbor Shops contains myriad high fashion boutiques

in a tropical-style interior replete with palm trees and fountains that preserve that resort feel even while shopping. Missoni, Dolce & Gabbana, Oscar De La Renta, Chloe, Graff, Jimmy Choo, Ralf Lauren, Versace, Silvia Tcherassi, Alexander McQueen, Balenciaga – just some of the brands represented at Bal Harbor Shops. The local collections differ from those typical in European shops; so for those looking for haute couture with a tropical touch, this is the place for you!

Even if you are not into shopping, you should come here for a delicious meal: authentic Italian cuisine at Carpaccio, delicious seafood at Le Zoo from the famous American restaurateur Stephen Starr, while at The Grill at Bal Harbor you can enjoy a perfectly cooked steak while watching behind the parade of Ferraris and Bentleys through the window.

In 2012, the resort launched a cultural arts program called Unscripted Bal Harbor, under which meetings are organized with fashionable contemporary artists, and open-air exhibitions are held on the promenade along the beach. Bal Harbor residents and visitors are provided Art Access Cards giving free admission to Miami museums, private collections and art exhibitions, including during the annual Art Basel Miami Beach fair in December.

Bal Harbor is also an antithesis to mass tourism in terms of its hotels: the resort has only four hotels, two of which are

hugely prestigious. The number one hotel is St. Regis Bal Harbor, which was built seven years ago, during which time it has provided indisputable evidence that classic, hard-hitting luxury, despite the minimalist trends of recent years, is more popular than ever. The 216 room beachfront hotel was such a wild success from the start that four years later, it underwent a 35 million dollar upgrade, resulting in the construction of several four-bedroom penthouse suites. Two of them can be combined at the request of guests to create a suite with an area of almost 700 m², the largest on the entire East Coast of the United States.

Designers from the Canadian American studio Yabu Pushelberg fused classic luxury with myriad fashionable modern art items, and the idea was a great success: the hotel is a big hit amongst both the glamorous fashion set and the more sophisticated crowd.

Ritz Carlton Bal Harbor hotel is the second five-plus star hotel in Bal Harbor. It proves greater privacy and an understated interior decor. If when you enter the lobby at St. Regis, you are hit by a barrage of mirror, glass and crystal surfaces which you reflect off a thousand times, at the Ritz Carlton the public areas are supremely minimalist and are arranged so that guests can enter and exit their room unnoticed: all 124 hotel rooms are located in different towers, two per floor, and each tower has a separate lift.

Bal Harbor welcomes a celebrity almost every week (the author of this article, for example, was lucky enough to celebrate her own birthday at Bal Harbor Shops with Will Smith at the next table), and both hotel concepts are in great demand, depending on whether a celebrity wants to keep their stay a secret or not.

The great pride of the Ritz Carlton is the views of both the ocean and Haulover Inlet, and the elegant Artisan Beach House restaurant serving local cuisine, with recipes dating back almost to the time of the Prohibition. Contemporary art is also in abundance here: the hotel collection, which includes works by Richard Deutsch and Edda Moses, has an estimated value of 3.5 million dollars.

The hotel is pet-friendly, with a special team of concierges who can look after your four-legged friend whilst you are out, take your dogs for walk in the adjacent dog walking park, arrange a haircut or appointment with a veterinarian. After all, dogs should also be able to enjoy their own resort paradise!

