



BAL HARBOUR SHOPS, SOUTH COURTYARD



BAL HARBOUR VILLAGE

SERENE SPOT

For those seeking a calmer, more sophisticated side to Miami, Bal Harbour is the place to be

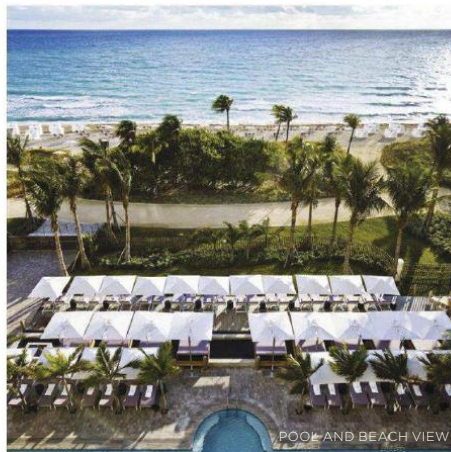
WORDS: SELMA DAY

Multimillion-pound mansions, high-end shopping, world-class dining, luxury hotels and a host of other sought-after amenities – no, I'm not talking about Mayfair.

This is Bal Harbour – one of Miami's most affluent areas, which has the added benefit of being on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, known for its beautiful stretch of white sandy beaches.

Located on the northern tip of Miami Beach, the secluded, oceanside neighbourhood is a 30-minute drive from the city's attractions and international airport.

Originally built in 1929, Bal Harbour has been a magnet for the rich and famous. In



the 1950s and 60s, Count Basie and Guy Lombardo could be seen having drinks at the Ivanhoe's Pump Room Lounge, while Frank Sinatra and his Rat Pack frequented the Americana's Carnival Supper Club.

Today, Miami's well-heeled flock to the open-air Bal Harbour Shops, which is ranked one of the top places in the world in terms of sales per sq ft. It's easy to see why. Think a tropical version of Bond Street.

Known as the Shopping Hall of Fame, it's home to more than 100 of the most coveted luxury fashion and jewellery brands, including Cartier, Bulgari, Louis Vuitton, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada and a Chanel boutique that

is designed after Coco Chanel's New York City apartment.

These big designer names sit amid lush landscaping complete with palm trees, colourful koi fish and resident turtles – all of which creates a sense of calm and a fine example of what the property guys call "place-making".

In alignment with the quality of shops at Bal Harbour are the restaurants, which attract a hip crowd from downtown Miami. There's a diverse offering, which includes top-notch Japanese at Makoto, American classics at Hillstone and Italian at Carpaccio, where you'll find paper-thin beef, salmon and tuna carpaccio alongside other Italian specials. Its buzzy terrace is a particularly lovely spot to dine and enjoy a cocktail or two in the evenings.

Accommodation-wise, there are a range of hotels to suit all budgets, including the Sea View Hotel, which caters more for families with its 220 rooms and suites featuring several categories and amenities, including many with balconies and kitchens. Then there's Beach Haus Bal Harbour, whose 96 spacious contemporary rooms and suites with kitchens and kitchenettes make it ideal for longer stays.



BAL HARBOUR SHOPS, NORTH KOI POND

At the top end of the scale is The Ritz-Carlton – an 18-storey glass and steel tower on the northern end of the island with breathtaking views of the jetty and ocean. All 124 rooms are accessed by semi-private elevators for VIP service, while the 2,800 sq ft presidential suite comes with extra perks such as a screening room and spa shower with floor-to-ceiling windows.

If you want to be near the shops and restaurants, then the St Regis is the one – it's just across the road from Bal Harbour Shops. With 213 guest rooms offering breathtaking ocean views, the hotel also has a good selection of restaurants and bars if you don't want to venture out.

Art lovers will be impressed with the artwork here. The Opera Gallery, which many will know from its Bond Street location, is situated off the lobby and showcases work by notable artists and sculptors.

Away from the bright lights of South Beach, there's a sense of calm at Bal Harbour and, while there are plenty of water-based activities available, from snorkelling, diving and deep-sea fishing to kayaking and paddle-boarding, its one-mile long beach path is perfect for a gentle early morning or evening stroll – or you can hire a bike and take a scenic spin along the coast and admire sculptures from renowned artists along the way.

Beyond the beach is a cultural initiative known as Unscripted Bal Harbour, a programme that brings contemporary art into public spaces and collaborates with institutions across south Florida. The Unscripted Art Access Card, offered to residents and hotel guests, provides complimentary or priority entry to a selection of museums and cultural venues.

While Bal Harbour may not be as well known as some of its neighbours, it may not remain a secret for long as those who love Miami seek a more sophisticated side of this dynamic city.

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