

Tropic's Magical Mystery Tour **ModWeekend 2013**

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Mai Kai, Charles F. McKirahan, 1956

Don't let its thatched roof, tiki appearance fool you. Underneath this South Seas-inspired dining establishment is a structure of steel-reinforced concrete. McKirahan's original structure has been added on to extensively, but this one-of-a-kind restaurant is impeccable and authentic from its carved statues to its gardens and waterfalls.

THERE ARE A HANDFUL OF CITIES in this country which have a signature style of architecture we all know of and connect with those cities. Boston's Back Bay has the largest extant grouping of Victorian-era townhomes in the country. The Chicago area is home to hundreds of exquisite, disciplined Prairie School residences. South Beach is home to great examples of structures built in the florid, Art Deco style. Fort Lauderdale was one of the nation's fastest growing post-war boom towns, and as such, had a great number of Mid-century Modern homes, office buildings, hotels and houses of worship built between 1950 and 1965. While many have been lost, a great number of fine examples have survived and now find themselves in an era that has learned to appreciate them.

On March 17th, a double-decker bus tour sponsored by Tropic Magazine and Tim Singer & Associates will wind the streets of Fort Lauderdale, Oakland Park and Wilton Manors, checking out some of the city's finest examples. Starting at Charles McKirahan's temple to the South Pacific, the Mai Kai, the tour will continue on to what could be considered Oakland Park's little homage to Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water, architect Dan Duckham's combination studio and residence on the shores of tiny Cherry Creek. Here, guests will have an opportunity to hear the architect interviewed, in person, by author and historian, Randall Robinson.

The tour continues to Wilton Manors to the meticulously restored Shuster Design Associates headquarters, also designed by Duckham in 1965. From there, the group will tour The Sanctuary, designed by Harold Wagner and built in 1960. The guests will continue on to Igor Plevitzky's fabulous confection, the Sea Tower. Designed while Plevitzky was finishing the Havana Riviera Hotel, Sea Tower has recently undergone a painstaking restoration to its exterior.

The tour continues two mile south along the beach, arriving first at M. Tony Sherman's ocean liner of a hotel, the Yankee Clipper, recently renovated as the Sheraton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort. On to the space-age Pier 66 hotel and finally stopping at the Girls' Club for a presentation by designer Margi Nothard of Glavovic Studio on what architecture today can learn from that of fifty years ago.

On the following pages is a glimpse of this year's tour. If you missed it, make plans for next year's excursion. Same weekend in March... but with a whole different crop of exceptional buildings!



The North Beach Village Mission Statement:

"To create an area where locals and visitors can experience love and happiness."



Royal Saxon circa 1950s
Now the Village Hotel



Winterset Hotel circa 1950s
Still the Winterset



King Cole circa 1960
Now the Royal Palms



Sea Isle circa 1950s
Now part of Aqua

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Duckham Studio, Dan Duckham, 1963
Jutting out over Cherry Creek, this stunning, layered structure was built as an office, home and separate apartment for the architect's parents. Simple materials like wood, concrete block and jalousie windows keep this structure honest and humble. Quite a feat for Lauderdale's version of Falling Water.

2



Robinson Beauty School, Dan Duckham, 1965 With its low-slung horizontality, this structure — now the home of Shuster Design Associates, is the work of Fort Lauderdale’s pre-eminent Subtropical Modernist architect and local disciple of Frank Lloyd Wright. Like works of the master, this structure hugs the landscape with low walls and planters as well as a complex floor plan.

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The Sanctuary, Harold E. Wagoner, 1959 Called “the foremost living church architect” in the early 1960s, for the Second Presbyterian Church, Wagoner abstracted traditional ecclesiastical motifs including simplified flying buttresses and walls of hurricane-proof stained glass comprised of concrete panels inset with compositions of jewel-like “pot metal” glass.





Sea Tower, Igor Polevitzky, 1957

This sinuous, sensuous, boomerang-shaped residential tower must have looked otherworldly to the Ozzie & Harriet generation it was born in. Polevitzky believed in working with nature in his buildings, opting for floor-through units that made the most of sea breezes. He also made great use of very deep, tray-style balconies and brise soleil elements.



Yankee Clipper, M. Tony Sherman, 1956

Known for his Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas and Catalina in Miami Beach, Sherman used the Nautical Moderne to great effect at this ocean liner of a hotel on Lauderdale Beach. Wrapped in continuous horizontal railings, each level is longer than the next, with ship staircases cascading down the hotel's aft or stern side.



7



Pier 66 Hotel, Richard F. Humble after a design by Robert Todd and George C. Wiesman, 1963-64 Bearing a resemblance to Frank Lloyd Wright's Price Tower, the original idea for this tower — from its cantilevered balconies to its spacecraft-like rooftop lounge — came from Robert Todd. Executives at Philips Petroleum (the hotel's original developer) had Humble complete the project with Todd & Wiesman as consultants.



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The Girls' Club, Glavovic Studio, 2007

Reworking an existing structure, Glavovic Studio takes clues from the architects of Florida's mid-century era and expands on them in current work like the glowing ediface of the Girls' Club, making them work for South Florida's unique set of climate issues.

