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HUFF POST TRAVEL

Palm Beach Treasures: Places and People Who Make Palm Beach Special



In 1892, Henry Flagler, a real estate and railroad tycoon and one of the founders of Standard Oil brought the railroad to eastern coast of Florida. In the process, he discovered what is now known as Palm Beach. Flagler was convinced that he had found one of the most beautiful places on earth and was determined to build an American Riviera there.

So Flagler went about constructing a resort community. His first project was the Royal Poinciana hotel in 1894, the world's largest structure which accommodated a staggering 2,000 guests. Two years later came the Palm Beach Inn (ultimately renamed the Breakers). Buzz circulated fast. And soon the Astors, Carnegies, Rockefellers, Vanderbilts and other notables came in droves -- all by word of mouth.

The allure of Palm Beach continues. But it's not just the sprawling mansions, 234 days of sunshine per year or days averaging 78 degrees that make the locale so special. Just like Henry Flagler, the area still draws great innovators who help create a unique place to visit. Here are just a few of the region's standouts.

Design superstar, Eric Villency and his team refashioned the swanky club lounge at the Ritz-Carlton, Palm Beach. Villency designed the retro-looking space with customized wallpaper murals and Carrera marble bar tops. Working with noted textile designer, Wook Kiim, Kim's hand-sketched monkey and palm-tree murals line the walls. The sofas and chairs were built from sustainable and eco-savvy materials like soy foam instead of petroleum based foam. The wood is reclaimed from the Cape Fear River. Available to hotel guests who book accommodations on the Club Lounge floor, it's the ideal place to kick back with a glass of chilled bubbly, fresh assorted cheeses, chocolates and the many snacks served throughout the day.