

CLASSIC DRIVER

The Betsy South Beach: A seaside colony

Lead

While the hustle and bustle of beach life rages in front of the Betsy Hotel on Ocean Drive, Miami, behind the 'Florida Georgian' façade you'll find calm and tranquillity. Ceiling fans, palm trees and a bar where Hemingway would have felt at home give the location true colonial style.

Miami Beach is famous for its colourful and edgy Art Deco architecture but it's all too easy to forget the older, colonial-style properties for which Florida was once so well known. The Betsy South Beach stands at the quiet end of Ocean Drive, just a stone's throw from the beach.

Built in 1942, the hotel was the subject of a two-year renovation programme that finished in 2009, when it reopened for business. Since then, it has gained many admirers from all over the world, where they sit dozing on antique sofas in the lobby, sun spilling through the ceiling-high blinds onto the plantation-style, slowly circulating fans.





During the Betsy's total renovation, interior designers Diamante Pedersoli and Carmelina Santoro (the former having produced work for Ralph Lauren) restored all 61 rooms and suites to the same theme. The dark walnut floors, white-painted wood furniture and extremely comfortable beds are far-removed from the usual pared-down fare offered by other boutique and 'designer' hotels. For those wishing to relax away from the beach, there's the charming courtyard swimming pool or a roof terrace with views of palms trees and the ocean.





Or, if more inclined to enjoy a little partying, guests need not leave the Betsy. In the BLT Steakhouse diners can enjoy excellent meat and seafood. At the bar, the house speciality 'Miami Heat' cocktail (tequila, passion fruit, lime juice, habanero syrup) will relax even the most stressed-out. And the hotel's walls are decorated with prints from the 'Lost' series of photographic books by Bob Bonis on the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. So one is joined by John and Paul, Mick and Keith, on the way to breakfast or the pool.

In fact, such is the laid-back charm of the Betsy South Beach, we wouldn't be surprised to see a slightly rumpled rock legend in Bermuda shorts greeting us on the porch.

Related Links

You can book a room at the Betsy South Beach here: www.thebetsyhotel.com.

The 'Lost Rolling Stones Photographs' are not only found on the walls of the Betsy, they are also on display at the [Not Fade Away Gallery](#).

Photos: The Betsy South Beach

Gallery

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