



AllWays Traveller

## Naples, Florida

# A short stretch of Paradise

Naples, in Southwest Florida, first became popular in the late 19th Century when magazine articles praised the area for its pleasingly sub-tropical climate, pristine beaches and glorious sunsets.

The area was frequently compared to the bay in Naples, Italy and the name stuck.

The Naples of today offers the same rich pleasures but with an added sophistication.

The tourist powers that be have branded Naples, with Marco Island and the Everglades, as the Paradise Coast – with real justification.

[www.ParadiseCoast.com](http://www.ParadiseCoast.com)

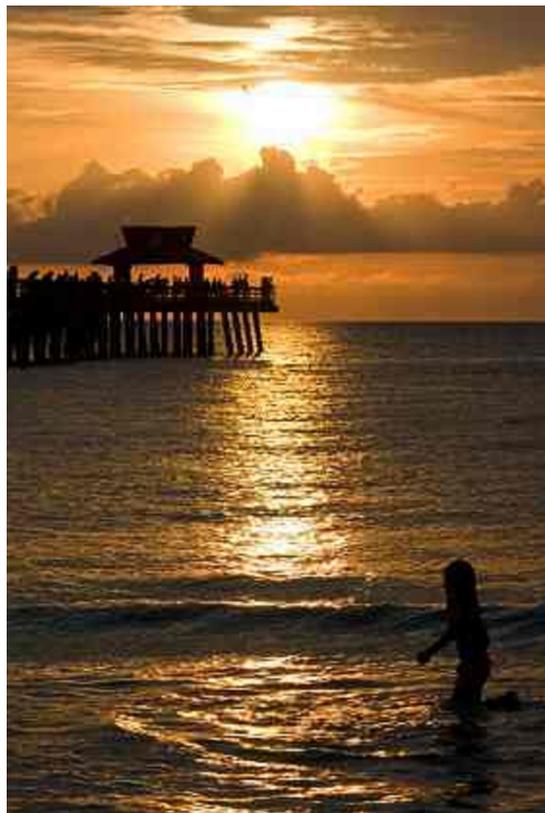
**Ashley Gibbins**

The International Travel Writers Alliance  
[ashley@itwalliance.com](mailto:ashley@itwalliance.com)

## Naples and the Paradise Coast

Naples, with Marco Island and the western portion of the Everglades, in Southwest Florida, is known as the Paradise Coast.

Naples beach, which has been voted best beach in America by the Travel Channel, runs along 10 miles of the Gulf of Mexico. The wider area also takes in a number of major nature preserves.



## A personal view

### Graceful living natural wonder

by Ashley Gibbins



Everyone in downtown Naples seems to start their day at the 5th Avenue Coffee Company.

Workers grabbing a coffee, a bagel and a 'hi' before heading off to work will happily mingle with active seniors still minded to put the world to rights; cyclists and power walkers making pit stops and moms, with toddlers in tow, sharing tips and parenting chores.

Very hairy, very courteous, Harley owners will park up and talk bikes and students use the place as an Internet free study centre. And then there's me, annoying all of them with questions about Naples lure as a visitor destination.

### You're more than welcome

Frank, a snowbird fleeing the severe winter months in the northern States got it about right. "You're more than welcome to come and stay a while, enjoy what we enjoy here - but it's OK if you don't"

And that's it. Naples is a real community - an undoubtedly prosperous community (more dollar millionaires than Beverly Hills), which takes pride in its appearance and real pleasure in the finer things in life.

Which is? Well a climate to die for - or rather live into healthy old age for – during nine months of the year (avoid the heat and humidity from June through August).

Then there's the location beside the gleaming white beaches and clear blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

As for Naples itself, the immaculately maintained downtown district (clustered around 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South), is a veritable 'film set' of art deco style buildings on palm-lined avenues.

These house designer shops, galleries and a whole host of bars and fine dining restaurants. Naples also enjoys a thriving arts and culture scene that places many times larger would be proud of.

Finally, Naples is a great base for trips along the Gulf Coast and to the Florida Everglades.

## The facts

### When to go



Florida is a genuine year round destination although Southwest Florida between June and September can be very hot and humid with a high chance of very heavy rain in late afternoon.

This period is also mosquito season for those looking to visit to the Everglades.

Florida's hurricane season runs from 1 June to 30 November.

### How to get there

#### By air

Southwest Florida International Airport is about 30 minutes drive from Naples.

[www.flylcpa.com](http://www.flylcpa.com)

International visitors will probably choose to fly into Miami International or Orlando International.

#### By road

Interstates 4 and 75 will get you to Naples from Orlando in about five hours and Interstates 95 /75 from Miami in about two hours.

#### Car rental

All major car rental companies operate in Florida.

I try to travel with Dollar, which has complete line of vehicles at competitive rates and always provides a cracking service.

[www.dollar.com](http://www.dollar.com)

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## The place to stay



Choosing the right place to stay is always one of the first things to get sorted.

If you are looking to stay in downtown Naples, you will want to stay at the Inn on Fifth.

This luxury boutique hotel, with roof top pool and opulent spa, is located in the heart of downtown Naples and within strolling distance of almost everything (including the Fifth Avenue Coffee Company).

McCabes Irish Pub and Grill, part of the hotel, is an authentic, Dublin built, pub that was shipped to Naples with its memorabilia intact. The Irish ambience of the place is enhanced with traditional Irish music most evenings.

Truluck's (just along the block) has a sophisticated piano lounge and a wonderful restaurant that the locals flock to (which is always a good sign). It's signature dish, fresh stone crab, is reared from the restaurants own fisheries.

These two are complemented by, at least, 20 independently owned restaurants offering a wide range of dining options.

[www.innonfifth.com](http://www.innonfifth.com)

## Where to watch the sun go down



The Naples Pier (12<sup>th</sup> Avenue S) at sundown provides one of those 'memories are made of this' moments.

Built in the 1888 as a freight and passenger dock, it is now the place to watch the pelicans diving for that last catch of the day.

## Where to stay

There is a wide range of accommodation in the Naples area, including the Inn on Fifth in downtown, and at a string of five-star oceanfront resorts.

Many hotels in Naples, Marco Island and the Everglades discount their rates between May and December.

[www.paradisecoast.com](http://www.paradisecoast.com)  
[www.innonfifth.com](http://www.innonfifth.com)

## Wining and dining

Naples has gourmet and relaxed dining at the open-air bars and bistros in Downtown and at bay or waterfront cafés.

A range of restaurants are also available at Tin City, the Mercato and the Village on Venetian Bay.

## What else to do

### Naples Zoo



Naples Zoo is in an historic 53-acre old tropical botanical garden and, while not huge, provides a delightful half day.

The primate expedition cruise is a 30 minute boat trip around the islands that are the cage free homes for the zoo's primates.

[www.napleszoo.org](http://www.napleszoo.org)

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## The Naples Botanical Garden

The Naples Botanical Garden is a definite must do.



The Garden opened in late 2009 following a total transformation led by a team of the world's best landscape architects and garden designers and a passionate band of staff and volunteers.

The Garden displays the plants and highlights the culture of regions between 26 degrees north and south, which includes Naples.

[www.naplesgarden.org](http://www.naplesgarden.org)

## A thriving arts scene

Naples gets the tag as number one small arts town in America and it's easy to see why.

### The Phil



That Philharmonic Center for the Arts is a truly premier arts and performance centre that is based in Naples thanks to the overwhelming drive and commitment of Myra Daniels, its founder, president and CEO.

This dynamic woman, widow of real life advertising *Mad Man* Don Draper, has devoted the last 25 years to creating a three-story, 30,000-square-foot complex with 15 galleries dedicated to displaying world-class paintings, sculpture, drawings and other art forms.

As a performance venue the *Phil* also attracts the world's finest musicians and entertainers, of all genres.

[www.thephil.org](http://www.thephil.org)

### Golf

Florida is one of the top golfing destinations and the Naples area has more than 80 championship courses.

### Going to the movies

There is always something a little special about going to the movies in the States, and the 11-screen Silverspot is as good a cinema as you will find with state of the art digital sound, leather seats and reserved seating.

The Silverspot is in the Mercato, a new 53-acre upmarket development of retail and restaurant outlets.

[www.silverspot.net](http://www.silverspot.net)

### Everglades City



Everglades City, a small town on the edge of Florida's Everglades, is known as the Stone Crab Capital of the World.

Over 375,000 pounds of stone crab claws are farmed between October and May each year.

Gulf grouper, snapper and other fish are also brought in regularly to the city's docks and many local restaurants serve the catch.

The town is also the western gateway to Everglades National Park and the staging post for the Everglades airboat tours and other guided tours of the *Ten Thousand Islands*.

The Everglades National Park Gulf Coast Visitor Center is the starting point for paddling the 99-mile Wilderness Waterway.

The Museum of the Everglades and Smallwood Store provides a real glimpse into the history of this area.

[www.nps.gov/ever](http://www.nps.gov/ever)  
[www.colliermuseums.com](http://www.colliermuseums.com)  
[www.florida-everglades.com](http://www.florida-everglades.com)

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## The von Liebig Art Center

The von Liebig, in downtown Naples, is a free entrance community art centre showcasing contemporary American art with an emphasis on Florida art.

From March through June 2010 the von Liebig stages *Princess Diana: Dresses of Inspiration* featuring gowns, shoes, handbags and memorabilia owned by Princess Diana.

[www.naplesart.org](http://www.naplesart.org)

## Natural wonder



If Naples provides the sophistication, the Everglades and the Ten Thousand (mangrove) Islands provides Florida's natural wonder.

One of North America's unspoilt wild areas it takes in Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park and Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve.

[www.florida-everglades.com](http://www.florida-everglades.com)

## The Seminole Tribe of Florida

The Seminole Tribe of Florida live on the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation and run swamp buggy eco-tours, airboat rides and a number of animal shows.

A rustic camping village provides native-style chickees for overnight stays.

Every spring the tribe stages the Big Cypress Shootout, a three-day battle reenactment and festival (26 to 28 February 2010), which honors the Seminole's struggle and sacrifice to remain in their homeland during the 1830's, when the United States was attempting to enforce its policy of Indian removal.

[www.semtribe.com](http://www.semtribe.com)

## The beaches



The Paradise Coast is known for its white sand beaches that stretch from Barefoot Beach Preserve at the northern tip of Collier County, throughout the city of Naples, to the deserted Ten Thousand Island region of the Everglades.

## Nature reserves

Naples is home to several major land reserves, including the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge, and Picayune Strand State Forest.

## Go fishing



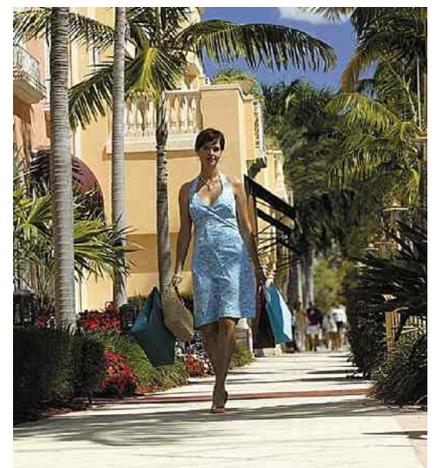
Collier County has 37 miles of barrier island coastline extending from Naples south to Marco Island and then deep into the mangrove forests of the Ten Thousand Islands and the Everglades.

These waters enable anglers to catch tarpon, snook and redfish in the backcountry or grouper, snapper and king mackerel in the Gulf.

Freshwater anglers can explore 1,500-acre Lake Trafford in Immokalee, famed for its crappie and bass action.

Most Florida anglers practice catch and release, ensuring there will be plenty of fish for the future and helping species with low populations to recover.

## More information



[www.ParadiseCoast.com](http://www.ParadiseCoast.com)

## The International Travel Writers Alliance



### AllWays

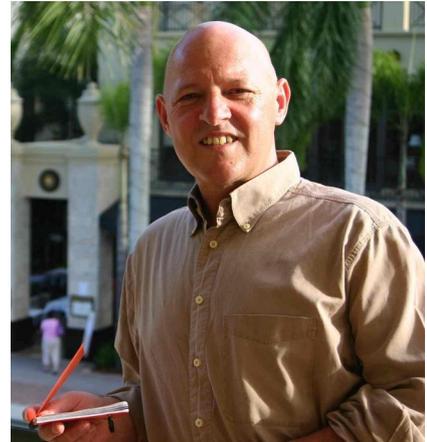
AllWays is the consumer travel service from the International Travel Writers Alliance.

### The International Travel Writers Alliance

The International Travel Writers Alliance represents travel writers, editors, broadcasters and photographers worldwide

The International Travel Writers Alliance  
Hampton House, 77 The Ridgeway, North  
Chingford, E4 6QW, London, UK.  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8524 4089  
E: [Ashley@itwalliance.com](mailto:Ashley@itwalliance.com)

## Ashley Gibbins



Ashley Gibbins is a third generation journalist and travel writer.

He is also Director General of the International Travel Writers Alliance and Managing Editor of AllWays.