



Travel

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TRAVEL | CULTURED TRAVELER

Illumination Without Sunblock

By ELAINE GLUSAC

On the kind of balmy February evening that draws snowbirds by the flocks to South Florida, I split from the flip-flop crowd clogging Lincoln Road Mall in Miami Beach and veered one block north to the New World Center. The Frank Gehry-designed glass and steel symphony hall opened in 2011, and at once established South Beach as a cultural destination. A cluster of patrons formed a white-haired clot in front of the box office where I learned that the evening's program, a recital by a third-year horn fellow with the center's New World Symphony, was sold out. True, it was a free event, but it required reservations and Dominic Rotella, the musician, was apparently the hottest ticket in town.



Mural by Shepard Fairey, part of Wynwood Walls, a constantly changing street art exhibit splashed across 80,000 square feet of exterior walls. Moris Moreno for The New York Times

"Get in line," a reedy patron said, indicating the informal queue of unfortunates around him. "You're number seven."

If a sellout at a musical fellow's concert is any indication, Miami craves culture. Now, thanks to a robust economy and a legacy bestowed by Art Basel — the immensely popular art event established in 2002 that returns Dec. 3 to 6 this year — Miami has accrued a critical mass of cultural attractions. From the Pérez Art Museum Miami to the thriving muralist district of Wynwood, Miami has developed a brainy complement to its long-established beach allure. And there's more on the horizon. Faena Forum, a 50,000-square-foot exhibit space designed by Rem Koolhaas, is set to open in April, and the Bass Museum of Art, currently closed for renovation, will add 50 percent more space with four new galleries when it opens next fall. Together, the newcomers offer rich cultural fodder outside Art Basel season if courting skin cancer isn't your idea of vacation.

It's not mine. In Miami visits past, I did what I could to dig into something deeper than a sand pail, including taking the South Beach architectural walking tour led by the Miami Design Preservation League, and going to the Wolfsonian Museum to peruse its decorative art collection — activities that, leisurely consumed, might take a day. When a friend, who lives in a gleaming high-rise in downtown's Brickell district, promised I'd never miss the beach during a weekend last winter in what she called the "new Miami," I had to accept that challenge. Besides, it was 10 below at home.

Aside from the pleasure of immediately defrosting on the 15-minute drive from the airport to the Pérez Art Museum Miami, there was the welcome of the Pérez itself, which is ringed with a generous veranda that invited recent arrivals and other idlers to swing in hammock chairs and gaze at the Government Cut channel between gallery visits.

If You Go

The **Pérez Art Museum Miami** (1103 Biscayne Boulevard; pamm.org) charges admission of \$16, which includes frequent hourlong tours of the museum's art and architecture.

Wynwood Walls (2520 Northwest Second Avenue; thewynwoodwalls.com) are the center of the Wynwood neighborhood and while viewing them is free, the hours vary, including 11 a.m. to midnight Fridays and Saturdays.

Wynwood Art Walks take place the second Saturday of each month, with guided tours starting around \$20. Information: Wynwoodartwalk.com.

New World Center (500 17th Street; nws.edu) is home to the New World Symphony, which offers concerts October through April, often also broadcast on its outdoor video wall.

In addition to sponsoring a writer in residence, the **Betsy Hotel** (1440 Ocean Drive; thebetsyhotel.com) hosts a daily poetry reading and regularly scheduled literary salons. Rooms from \$265.

The **O, Miami Poetry Festival** (omiami.org) takes place throughout the month of April.