

TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By ALEXANDRA COHEN

FORT LAUDERDALE: Last winter I was thrilled to make my escape for a winter getaway in the sunny state of Florida. For the first time, I had the opportunity to visit Fort Lauderdale, which was a real treat (<https://www.visitlauderdale.com>).

Fort Lauderdale is the largest municipality in Broward County, which encompasses 1,197 square miles with 24 miles of

Atlantic Ocean beach. It has a resident population of over 1.95 million people.

Fort Lauderdale is the home to about 24,000 Jews out of a population of 180,000. There are around 10 synagogues in the Fort Lauderdale area covering many different streams of Judaism. Of the 16 synagogues listed in the Fort Lauderdale Yellow Pages, four are in Plantation, four are listed in Sunrise, three in

Lauderdale, two in Miami Beach and one in Miami.

WHERE TO STAY: During my trip, I chose to stay at the B Ocean Resort (<https://www.boceanresort.com/>), which many people may remember as the former Sheraton Yankee Clipper.

The Jewish CEO and founder of B Hotels & Resorts is Ayelet Weinstein, who started working in multi-family and condo-conversions in 1996. In 2004, she became interested in a local building that she assumed to be an apartment building. After pursuing the building and learning it was, in fact, a hotel, she discovered a passion for the hospitality industry and has remained involved ever since.

The resort is conveniently located in the heart of the city, around 15 minutes from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, Port Everglades, downtown Las Olas Boulevard and along the famed coastal highway A1A. The B Ocean Resort offers 481 spacious guest rooms and suites, ranging in size from 300 sq. ft. to a lavish 1,700 sq. ft. – all of which are inspired by the property's serene ocean-front location.

The hotel has five restaurants on site. The Salty Siren is the hotel's poolside restaurant. Otherwise, the hotel offers seafood and Mediterranean cuisine at the Naked Crab, drinks and brunch with mermaid shows and burlesque shows at the Wreck Bar, more drinks and cock-

tails at the Florida Bar in the lobby, and the grab and go Clipper Express, which includes offerings such as bagels, croissants, muffins, juice, coffee, and chips. Come by in the evening for grab and go sushi as well!

The B Hotel and Resort is located at 1140 Seabreeze Blvd. For more details go to www.boceanresort.com or call 1-954-524-5551. B Hotels also has locations in the Florida Keys and in the Disney Springs area in Lake Buena Vista. Visit <http://www.bhotelsandresorts.com>

A TRUE DELIGHT ON THE BEACH: We were thrilled to discover that The B Hotel & Resort partners with the award-winning Boucher Management (www.boucherbrothers.com) in order to pamper guests (Please turn to page 22)

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Du Travail bien fait, ça se voit!

TRAVEL TALES

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while they luxuriate at the beach. I have had the pleasure of experiencing their hospitality during previous stays at hotels in the Hollywood and St. Petersburg areas.

Boucher Brothers is a Hospitality Management Company that specializes in a variety of outlets including pool, beach, food and beverage, water sports and team building activities. They are a forward-thinking and proficient hospitality company expanding across North America. The company currently owns a portfolio of over 100 hotels and condominium properties, 45 blocks of public beach throughout Florida's east and west coasts and 50 blocks of public beach in Virginia Beach.

The Boucher Brothers know that when you come to the beach, you want to relax and feel pampered – their courteous and friendly staff does just that. The Boucher Brothers team provided excellent service during my stay. Upon your arrival at the beach, they

will set you up with your free beach chairs, as well as an umbrella if you wish. Further, you have the option to rent the more luxurious sun loungers, with comfortable cushioning and unobstructed views of the ocean. Servers from the hotel restaurant, The Salty Siren, come right to your seat to take your order, further enhancing your experience.

DINING OUT: On the famous Fort Lauderdale boulevard that leads to the beach, you will find the Friendship Café, which is situated right next to the Las Olas Chabad Jewish Center. Part of The Friendship Circle, a local non-profit here in Montreal, the kosher Mediterranean restaurant and coffee bar serves lunch and dinner options, from falafel hummus plates and salads to kebab pita sandwiches and vegetarian shawarma. They offer training and employment opportunities to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

The Naked Crab Seafood Kitchen + Cocktail Bar was conveniently located right in our hotel lobby at the B Ocean Hotel and Resort. It was a most convenient place to dine after checking in right at dinnertime. The Naked Crab embodies authentic, local dining on Fort Lauderdale Beach. Executive Chef David Morales conceptualizes slightly different menus every season and blends together fresh ingredients and spices in order to create contemporary Mediterranean dishes influenced by the flavors of Europe, North and South America. The menu is sourced locally using fresh seafood and produce from local farms.

We also experienced the Matchbox Restaurant (www.matchboxrestaurants.com).

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com), part of an American chain first opened in 2003. Matchbox currently has 15 locations, including Washington, Maryland, Virginia, and of course Florida. Matchbox is part of Thompson Hospitality, one of the largest retail food service management companies in the USA.

The Matchbox in Las Olas, Fort Lauderdale, opened in early 2022. It is located in a particularly trendy area which features dining and entertaining on the New River, with lovely water views. Since its debut, Matchbox has become known for brick oven pizzas, mini burgers, fresh

salads, and chef-inspired entrées, like Miso salmon and chimichurri steak frites. Diners can enjoy elevated American-bistro fare crafted from high quality ingredients. I particularly enjoyed their delicious cocktails, including the strawberry rose margarita and the peach lemon drop, as well as the spinach and artichoke dip, the aforementioned Miso salmon (a menu highlight!), as well as the chicken pesto pizza.

Matchbox is located at 221 SW 1st Avenue. Readers can call 954-751-5959 for a reservation. Visit <https://www.matchboxrestaurants.com/>.

COMMUNITY REPORT

(Continued from page 6)

the lessons of the Holocaust, as well as the remarkable contribution Holocaust survivors have made to Canada, remain within the national consciousness for generations

to come. Open daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. I took a quick look, but will have to go back for a proper visit on my next trip.

CINESTARZ: I went to the CinéStarz theatre

complex at the St. Laurent Shopping Centre for the first time to see the motion picture *The Fablemans*. The CinéStarz movie theatre chain, owned by Jewish businessman Bruce Gurberg, also has facilities in nearby Orleans and others in Burlington, Ontario and three in the Montreal area – Côte Saint-Luc, Côte des Neiges and St. Leonard. Info: www.cinestarz.ca.

RABIN IS BACK: Federation CJA chose well when they hired Stephen Rabin last year as Director of Immersive Experiences and Missions for March of the Living (MOL), Birthright and more. A former director of the Y Country Camp, Stephen fits like a glove here. It all starts with the first MOL trip in four years later this month to Poland and Israel April 16 to 28. Bobby Titleman and Eva Cohen, who were selected as co-chairs three years ago for a trip that was cancelled

when the COVID-19 pandemic began, are back in the saddle. Meanwhile, present-day CEGEP students who missed their chance to experience an MOL will have the opportunity to do so on a second trip slated for May 28 to June 9. Stephen is the ideal person to be at the helm.

FEDERATION CJA PODCAST: The Federation CJA 360 Podcast: The Pulse of Montreal's Jewish Community, hosted by President and CEO Yair Szlak, is already a big hit. Each episode features a captivating guest—from community leaders and experts to influencers—sharing their unique perspectives and insight on topics such as Jewish identity, Israel, antisemitism, Holocaust education, and philanthropy. Log on to FederationCJA.org/Podcast.

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