

FLORIDA WEEKLY®

KEY WEST EDITION

WEEK OF OCTOBER 18-24, 2018

www.FloridaWeekly.com

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Join
IN THE
FUN

FANTASY FEST 2018: WEEK ONE

BY LAURA RICHARDSON
Florida Weekly Correspondent

IS IT JUST ME, OR DOES IT SEEM LIKE FANTASY FEST 2017 WAS mere moments ago? It seems like my house is still covered in remnants of last year's parties — glitter, feathers, tulle and the rest of the detritus that comes with playing professional dress-up. And as we speak, piles of boas, stacks of tutus and corsets, and boxes of costumes are being hauled down from attics and dragged

SEE FUN, A10 ▶

Images from last year's Fantasy Fest reveal depths of excitement and revelry.



Michael Franti and Spearhead bringing 'Stay Human' to Key West

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

After three months of successful dates this summer, including sold-out shows at Red Rocks Amphitheater, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery, Red Butte Garden and Salvage Station, Michael Franti and Spearhead keep adding dates to their "Stay Human" tour. The tour, which kicked off Oct. 4 at The Paramount in Huntington, N.Y., includes performances at Philadel-

phia's The Fillmore with Thievery Corporation, Atlanta's Variety Playhouse, The Cowan in Nashville, Champions Square in New Orleans with Trombone Shorty, The Gates Hotel in Key West and more. Dustin Thomas and Victoria Canal will be sup-

SEE FRANTI, A15 ▶

COURTESY PHOTO
Michael Franti and Spearhead



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FANTASYFEST.COM / COURTESY PHOTO

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OFF OFF DUVAL

The most traveled and visible street in Key West is only the beginning, the surface, of what the town has to offer. Ask the locals about their favorite spots, stroll through quiet neighborhoods or down alleyways off Duval and you'll begin to dive deeper into the quieter, more diverse and less readily apparent offerings. Here are eight spots you might not see at first glance.

Better than Sex, 926 Simonton St. 305-296-8102; www.betterthanssexkeywest.com. A great place for couples. Swing by this dessert-only, adults-only restaurant late in the evening. Indulge your senses with chocolate dipped wine glasses and cheeky, homemade desserts and beverages such as an Ephemere Apple Spiced Ale in a tall beer glass with a signature caramel rim-job. Lick it good.

Mellow Café and Gastro Pub, 1605 Roosevelt Blvd. 305-745-3874; www.mellowventureskeywest.com. Near the water in Old Town Key West, the café is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and offers unique island fare with a mellow atmosphere to match. The menu items are crafted with fresh, locally sourced ingredients and include a fresh catch, Havana roasted pork, romaine leaf plates and caramelized banana chocolate tacos. Drink options include a large selection of craft beers, 11 rotating tap beers, wine, house-made sangria and champagne cocktails. They have a great happy hour daily from 5-7 p.m., and delivery is available.

Cuban Coffee Queen, 284 Marga-



COURTESY PHOTO

The Mellow Café and Gastro Pub is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

ret St. 305-292-4747; www.cuban-coffeequeen.com. The strong Cuban coffee at this hole in the wall is also rich in Key West heritage. A café con leche paired with a classic Cuban sandwich or some Havana rice and beans will keep you going long into a Key West night.

Firefly, 223 Petronia St. 305-849-0104; www.fireflykeywest.com. Being that Key West is home to the southernmost point of the continental United States, it's fitting that the island is home to a Southern-inspired restaurant. Firefly's plantation-style look and its menu give it the most down-home feel of any culinary experience on the island. The shrimp and grits, fried chicken and bacon-wrapped meatloaf are a few fan favorites.

Key West Island Bookstore, 513 Fleming St. www.Keywestisland-

books.com; 305-294-2904. This decades-old boutique bookstore offers a surprisingly varied wealth of current and used titles, from bestsellers to rare titles. Often open late, it's an inviting place to browse the crowded stacks.

La Rubia Fine Hats, 510 Fleming St. 305-296-6059; www.larubiakeywest.com. This is the Florida Keys' only importer of authentic Panama hats. The owners developed the boutique to carry on the centuries-old tradition of hand weaving hats (which come from Ecuador, not Panama, by the way). There are styles for men and women in a wide array of colors and weaves. There's also a nice selection of wearable fair trade crafts such as jewelry, ikat wraps and shigra bags.

Little Pearl, 632 Olivia St. 305-204-4762; www.littlepearlkeywest.com. Nestled in the heart of Old Town Key West and away from the bustling downtown streets sits this excellent spot for fresh local catch and innovative cuisine with a tropical twist. It's new and it's hot. Reservations are required.

Nancy Forrester's Secret Garden, 518 Elizabeth St. 305-294-0015; www.nancyforrester.com. Ms. Forrester has a secret, and it's not her garden, per se: It's what she keeps there. The longtime environmentalist has been caring for orphaned parrots for more than 30 years. She invites the public to meet them, take pictures, hold them and listen as she educates the community about her fine feathered friends. ■

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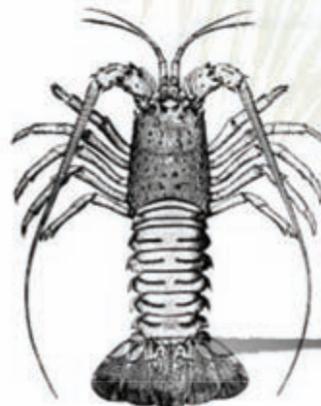
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**CRAZY LADY
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**ISLAND LIFE
AMERICAN LAGER**

Standard American Lagers are the "regular" strength versions of the light American lagers. The style guidelines for this beer are almost identical as those for the light versions.



**LAZY WAY IPA
AMERICAN IPA**

A medium-bodied, lightly toasted IPA with a malt character and a balanced bitterness. The piney hop notes carry through to the flavor. Finishes crisp and fairly dry.

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- LAGERHEADS BEACH BAR
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MAP IT OUT



Getting around Key West

1. Southernmost Point

The corner of South and Whitehead streets
www.southernmostpointwebcam.com
 The city of Key West erected this concrete buoy in 1983 to denote the southernmost point in the continental United States.

2. Conch Tour Train

303 Front St.
 305-294-5161 or 888-916-8687
www.conchtourtrain.com
 The iconic train has been winding its way through the streets of Key West since 1958.

3. Sloppy Joe's

201 Duval St.
 305-294-5717
www.sloppyjoes.com
 A Key West tradition since 1933, this bar's famous patrons include Ernest Hemingway and rum runner Habana Joe.

4. Mallory Square Sunset Celebration

1 Whitehead St.
 786-565-7448
www.sunsetcelebration.org
 This nightly festival begins at water's edge an hour or two before sunset and includes street performers, local artisans, food carts, palmists and psychics.

5. Truman Little White House

111 Front St.
www.trumanlittlewhitehouse.com
 The Little White House adds a presidential luster to the Conch Republic. Originally built for Naval officers in 1890 and used as a command headquarters in three wars, the Little White House later served as lodging for President Harry S. Truman's winter retreats from 1946 to 1952.

6. The Ernest Hemingway Home & Museum

907 Whitehead St.
 305-294-1136
www.hemingwayhome.com
 Take the tour and say hello to one of the 40-50 six-toed cats, all descendants of Hemingway's cat, Snowball.

7. The Key West Butterfly & Nature Conservatory

1316 Duval St.
 305-296-2988 or 800-839-4647
www.keywestbutterfly.com
 More than 50 butterfly species from around the world and 20 exotic bird species coexist in this climate-controlled, glass-enclosed habitat that includes waterfalls, flowering plants and trees.

8. Mel Fisher Maritime Museum

200 Greene St.
 305-294-2633

www.melfisher.org

Exhibits include treasures from the Spanish galleons of 1622 discovered by Mel Fisher and his crew.

9. Mile Marker 0 Sign

490 Whitehead St. (corner of Fleming Street)
 U.S. 1 begins here in Key West and continues 2,369 miles north up the East Coast before ending in Fort Kent, Me. Stop here to commemorate your visit to Key West with a photo next to the iconic Mile Marker 0 sign.

10. Key West Express Ferry Terminal

100 Grinnell St.
 239-463-5733
www.Keywestexpress.net
 Traveling via the Express is truly the best way to get between Key West, Fort Myers Beach or Marco Island. You'll enjoy air-conditioned interiors, exterior sun decks, couches, tables and even reclining airline-style seating. There's a full-service galley, full-service bar and flat-screen TVs with satellite television.

11. Audubon House and Garden

205 Whitehead St.
 305-294-2116
www.Audubonhouse.com
 Original lithographs by John James

Audubon are on display in this former home of shipwreck salvager Capt. John Geiger.

12. Key West City Cemetery

Bordered by Angela, Frances and Olivia streets and Windsor Lane
 305-292-6718
www.Friendsofthekeywestcemetery.com
 Stop by the sexton's office near the entrance at Passover and Windsor lanes and pick up a map that includes a free walking tour.

13. Fort Zachary Taylor State Park and Beach

At the ocean end of Southard Street and bordering the Naval Reservation.
 305-295-0037
www.Fortzacharytaylor.com
 "Fort Zach" is known to locals and tourists alike as one of Key West's best beaches. In addition to the expansive beach, the 54-acre park has nature trails, bike paths, picnic tables and grills and Historic Fort Zachary Taylor. Enjoy the beautiful view of the Atlantic Ocean and the Key West Shipping Channel. ■

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BARTENDER OF THE WEEK

Jessica Power: the darling of Ocean Key

BY JENNIFER WHITE
Florida Weekly Correspondent

If you are lucky enough to work with the people you love, then work doesn't feel so much like work after all. It feels like fun. Add to that night after night of world-famous sunsets that drip magnificent hues of gold into the most beautiful shades of ocean blue and you've got yourself one of the best gigs on the island.

"They're always different," Jessica Powers (Jess for short) says about seeing more sunsets in the past year than some do in their whole lives. "I never get tired of it. I always find myself stopping to take it all in, and I'm grateful."

"I love that I get to stare at the Gulf of Mexico. And I love that the majority of people who come here are on vacation and are laid back and happy. And of course, I love my co-workers. It's how I met my core group of friends. They're friends I want to brag about."

I met Jess seven years ago when she started waitressing the Sunset Pier of Ocean Key Resort. That quickly turned into a permanent position at the Liquid Lounge pool bar.

In what feels like a lifetime ago I, too, was working at the boutique hotel on Duval Street. Jess had just moved to Key West from deep within the heart of Georgia, seeking a simpler life after realizing that working as the executive assistant to the CEO of an advertising agency wasn't exactly her destiny. When she found herself in the hospitality industry on a little

island in the middle of nowhere, she knew it "wasn't by the book," but it was how she wanted to live her life.

As it turns out, the money was better, too.

"I've never looked back," she says.

When I met Jess, she was exactly the same person she is now: bright-eyed and cheerful, radiant and free-spirited with a smile that can heal hearts and turn heads and a voice laced with a sweet drawl of the South. For these reasons and many more, we immediately became friends and to this day consider each other one of the best. We even share the same tattoo along with three other friends (a reminder to us all of one of Jess' birthday celebrations).

We met when we were both innocently wild and single. Now I'm married and she has a long-term boyfriend she describes as "her best friend, crime partner and love all in one." And we don't have as much time off together as we would like to have, but we see each other as much as we can.

Along with her full-time gig as a bartender, Jess spends one day a week assisting a real estate office, and every moment in between she manages social media accounts for several Key West businesses. Some family members have also made the southernmost migration and so her mom, her brother and his newborn daughter and her uncle also help keep her busy with dinner parties and barbecues at Fort Zachary Taylor State Park.

I imagine Jess was always a good kid growing up.



JENNIFER WHITE / FLORIDA WEEKLY

Though her first hangover still gives her chills to this day, it didn't shy her away from bars. Instead, bars are where she makes her living.

Jessica soon after found her way behind the marble at a "staple college hangout," serving casual bar food washed down with pitchers of beer, an atmosphere that is very different then the oasis she's in now. Among her favorite drinks to make customers these days: a cucumber watermelon mojito and her own creation called the Coco Breeze, a combination of muddled lime and pineapple with coconut rum or vodka and coconut water. "It's like a super skinny piña colada," she says.

She's a natural hostess, hopping from one chair to another making sure guests have what they need while they soak up the sun.

Although the Liquid Lounge is restricted to hotel guests only, one can have the pleasure of a day pass to this idyllic hideaway by visiting the in-house spa for one of a Balinese massage or a Japanese ritual bath.

Otherwise, a room at the Ocean Key Resort will cost you about \$300 a night — totally worth it for the location and, of course, the bartenders like Jess.

"I'm a carefree, optimistic person who might seem shy at first," she smiles. "But once you know me, you're never going to get rid of me."

Indeed, she makes it easy to be her friend. ■

"I never drank until I went to college," she confesses, somewhat confirming my suspicion. "My first drink was a vodka cranberry."

When she has a drink these days, she says, "I need fresh ingredients. I'd rather have one or two craft cocktails than four or six bad ones." (We won't talk about what happened after her fourth vodka cranberry back in the day.)



GENTLEMEN, COME ON DOWN!

Madame DuJour's
Magical Game Show
& BURLESQUE EXPERIENCE

OCTOBER 19TH-26TH, 2018
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Key West BURLESQUE | The Florida Keys & Key West | FANTASY FEST 2018

waterfrontplayhouse.org

Spotlight on Key West Burlesque's Nick Locapo: 'the Hardest Working Magician in America'

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

Don't blink, or you will miss it as Key West Burlesque presents "Madame Dujour's Magical Game Show & Burlesque Experience." An interactive burlesque extravaganza, the theatrical event incorporates TV game show antics and carnival-style games with a tantalizing twist of burlesque. At the Waterfront Playhouse, Oct. 19-26 as part of Fantasy Fest 2018, the show is hosted by magician Nick Locapo, "the Hardest Working Magician in America."



LOGAPO

Nick, a featured and resident magician on stages across America, has performed his close-up and stage act for more than 1 million people and thousands of organizations. Now based in Ohio as a resident performer for the legendary P3 Magic Theater, he previously spent five years performing at Universal's NBC studios in Orlando. His charm has no bounds, from his quick one-liners to his unbelievable tricks, down to his cheeky smile and famous hair.

"You're going to fall in love with him and his magic," says the show's producer Christa Hunt, who has been offering original burlesque shows in the Florida Keys since 2006.

The amusing, sweet, smart-as-a-whip wizard, who is also the face of Penguin

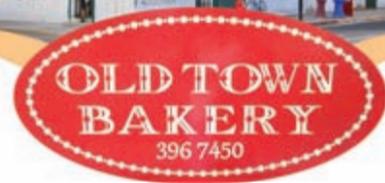


Magic Shop, the largest magic shop in the world, is the face of "Madame Dujour's Magical Game Show and Burlesque Experience," entertaining audiences with magic and mayhem during the live game show event until the very end.

The experience also has appearances from some of Key West's favorite local performers, including Tatah Dujour, Moana Amour and Chief Peach. They are joined by the extraordinary Miss Jenna Beth and aerialists Kerry and Katie Tice. The show also has a rotating cast of surprise guest performers that includes Cheeky Derrière, Aurora Natrix and Sofia Luna.

So, step right up, folks, order your tickets and prepare to be amazed. ■

To purchase tickets for "Madame Dujour's Magical Game Show and Burlesque Experience," call the box office at 305-394-7445 or visit www.waterfrontplayhouse.org.



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-Miami New Times 4/2017



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Submission
South Beach

Submission
South Beach

Fri, October 26th - 8pm

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KEY WEST CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SPECIAL EVENTS

10th annual Remarcable Pumpkin Patch

Oct. 18, 9 a.m.
MARC House
1401 Seminary St.
www.marchose.org

Fantasy Fest King and Queen Coronation

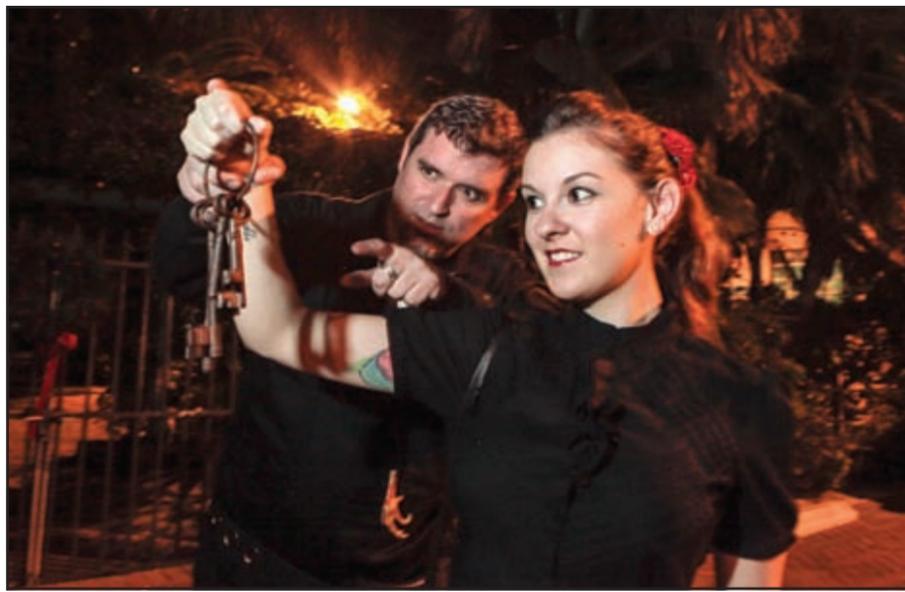
Oct. 19, 6 p.m.
Key West Amphitheater
East Quay Road
www.ahiticketleap.com

Cocktails for Animal Tails

A benefit for the Florida Key SPCA
Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
Rick's
202 Duval St.

Cher Karaoke-Hosted by Randy Roberts

Oct. 24, 5 p.m.
Republica Bar and Lounge
24 North Hotel
3820 N. Roosevelt Blvd.
www.gateshotelkeywest.com



COURTESY PHOTO

Key West is consistently ranked as one of the most haunted cities in the United States. Come enjoy an interactive tour featuring unusual and entertaining guides on the Ghost Tours and Ghost Hunts, nightly, at 301 Whitehead St. and 1102 Duval St. 305-395-1435 or www.haunted-keywest.com.

Mary Ellen's

420 Appelrouth Lane
• Open mic with Comedy Key West, Mondays, 9 p.m.
• Drunken Spelling Bee, First Monday of each month, 9 p.m.
• Trivia, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
• SIN Night (Service Industry Night), Wednesdays 8 p.m. to 4 a.m.

Mellow Café and Gastropub

Bike Nights, Live Music
Ride your bike and get half off your meal

Thursday, 6-10 p.m.
1605 North Roosevelt Blvd.
www.mellowkw.com

Smoking Tuna

4 Charles St.
Live music nightly
Check the schedule at
www.smokingtunasaloon.com

Sloppy Joe's

201 Duval St.
Live music nightly
Check the schedule at
www.sloppyjoes.com

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs by Jorge de la Torriente

Ongoing
De La Gallery
419 Duval St.
www.delagallery.com
305-395-2210

Homegrown

Photographs by Michael Marrero
Ongoing
Gallery on Greene
606 Greene St.
www.galleryongreene.com



MUSIC

Green Parrot Bar

601 Whitehead St.
Live music nightly
Check the schedule at
www.greenparrot.com

Irish Kevin's

211 Duval St.
Live music nightly
Check the schedule at
www.irishkevins.com

CINEMA

Tropic Cinema

416 Eaton St.
www.tropiccinema.com
Check the website for ongoing films

LGBT

Aqua Nightclub

711 Duval St.
• Aqua Idol for Fantasy Fest King and




THE REVIVALISTS
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ON SALE OCT 19TH

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KEY WEST CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Queen
Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
• Drag shows, Nightly, 7 and 9 p.m.
• Karaoke, Monday-Thursday, 11 p.m.
www.Aquakeywest.com

Bobby's Monkey Bar
900 Simonton St.
Karaoke, nightly, 9:30 p.m.
Bobby's Monkey Bar on Facebook

Bourbon St. Pub
724 Duval St.
• Just Jeff (Moss), Thursday-Sunday, 8-10 p.m.
• Ronnie, Monday-Wednesday, 3-8 p.m.
• The Men of Bourbon, nightly
www.BourbonSt.pub.com

801 Bourbon Bar
801 Duval St.
• Drag shows, nightly, 9 and 11 p.m.
• Happy hour drag, 5 p.m. Saturday
• Drag karaoke, 4 p.m. Sunday
• Messy Mondays with Mulysa, 1 a.m. Monday
• Fierce and Fabulous/Dragalicious, 1 a.m. Wednesday
www.801bourbon.com

Sidebar at Aqua
504 Angela St.
Kristen McNamara, Wednesday and Saturday, 6:30-9:30 p.m.
www.sidebarkeywest.com

La Te Da
1125 Duval St.
• Christopher Peterson, Oct. 18, 9 p.m.
• Randy Roberts, Oct. 20, 9 p.m.
• 3Sum, Oct. 18, 19, 20 and 21 8:30 p.m.
• Ronnie Lively, Oct. 22, 8:30 p.m.
• The Fabulous Spectrelles, Oct. 23-24, 8:30 p.m.
• Tea Dance, Sunday, 4-6:30 p.m.
www.Lateda.com



#KW TOP PICKS

10.19

■ Come out and see the newly appointed royals at the **Fantasy Fest King and Queen Coronation**, Oct. 19, 6 p.m., Key West Amphitheater, East Quay Road — www.ahi.ticketleap.com



10.24

■ **Cher Karaoke hosted by Randy Roberts**, Oct. 24, 5 p.m., Republica Bar and Lounge at 24 North Hotel, 3820 N. Roosevelt Blvd. — www.gateshotelkeywest.com



10.18

10th annual Remarcable Pumpkin Patch, Oct. 18, 9 a.m., MARC House, 1401 Seminary St. — www.marchouse.org

AROUND KEY WEST

Local Farm Stand
Wednesday, 5-7 p.m.
Mellow Café and Gastropub
1605 North Roosevelt Blvd.

Ghost Tours and Ghost Hunts
Nightly
301 Whitehead St. and 1102 Duval St.
305-395-1435
www.hauntedkeywest.com

Free Nutrition Sessions
Wednesdays through October, 5-7 p.m.
Monroe County Library-Key West
700 Fleming St. ■




10.23

■ **Cocktails for Animal Tails**, A benefit for the Florida Key SPCA, Oct. 23, 7 p.m., Rick's, 202 Duval St.

FLORIDA KEYS SPCA



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EXPIRES 11/4/18

FUN

From page 1

from under beds. Outfits (or lack-of-outfits) for every theme party are being meticulously plotted out to the tiniest accessory (or strategically placed scrap of clothing — one must avoid violating public decency laws, after all).

Yes, friends, the clouds of glitter in the air can only mean one thing: it's almost time for Fantasy Fest here in Key West and the bodies — large, small, taut, squidgy, old, young and many nearly naked — have already started arriving in droves.

Maybe you've been stuck under a very large rock for the past few decades; if so, you're forgiven for not knowing what Fantasy Fest is. That's what we here at the Florida Weekly are for.

Begun in 1979 as a way of boosting an otherwise dull and deserted time of year in Key West, this 10-day, adults-only festival has since morphed into the largest event in the Florida Keys, and one of the most unique and popular of its kind in the country. Imagine Halloween and Mardi Gras got FUBAR one night in late January, and nine months later that beautiful union begat a screaming infant they called Fantasy Fest.

To hear locals tell it, the event started out small — quaint, even — with early themes like “Old Key West” and “Plays of Tennessee Williams.” Over time, it developed a decidedly more adult attitude (most participants of last year’s “Time Travel Unravels” seemed to have been bused in from a space-themed comic book convention where clothes were irrelevant and silver body paint ubiquitous).

It's doubtful that founding member Joe Liszka could have foreseen today's current iteration of Fantasy Fest. Liszka, who in '79 was busy serving as president of the Tourist Development Association of Monroe County, spent his days wracking his brain for strategies to attract more tourists to the Keys in the off-season. Always popular during the winter months amongst tourists fleeing the cold, business dropped significantly after the weather became more pleasant north of Miami. The snow birds flew back to their nests, so to speak, leaving empty hotels and bars — and plummeting profits — behind them.

According to the official history of Fantasy Fest, Liszka lead fellow TDA board member Frank Romano down to Duval Street on Halloween and asked him to report what he saw when the twosome arrived at the quiet, uninhabited roadside. It turned out to be a trick question; Romano saw nothing, which was, Liszka explained, precisely the point. The island's residents and shopkeepers had developed a distinctly European habit of boarding up their homes and businesses and leaving for vacation en masse during the scorching fall months of September and October.

To Liszka, however, there was no reason Key West should conform to the typical tourist-driven template of high season/low season occupancy. Key West was sunny and strange all year round. Why should its visitors not take advantage of that fact 365 days of the year?

Liszka felt the island needed an injection of fun, something that would draw crowds and reinvigorate the community during what had become a decidedly dreary time to be in here.

Nearly 40 years later, Fantasy Fest is still celebrated during the 10 days leading up to Halloween and has become the largest and most profitable of all of Key West events. Hotels, B&Bs and private rental homes sell out months in advance, with nightly rates skyrocketing in response. (During 2016's election-themed Fantasy Fest, a single hotel room was reportedly rented for almost \$700, twice its yearly average rate of \$350.)



COURTESY PHOTO

The Tutu Party is always one of the most popular events at Fantasy Fest.

In the weeks leading up to October, costume stores spring up seemingly overnight, their aisles overflowing with feather boas, fishnet stockings, masks, makeup and wigs. But for some annual attendees, prep begins far more than a few weeks before the festival's start. With many of the festival's events offering thousands of dollars in cash prizes, seasoned attendees begin work on their costumes six to eight months in advance, or more, with results ranging from Broadway-worthy ensembles to skimpy outfits bordering on obscene.

Historically, Key West has been an oasis for some of our nation's most dedicated drinkers. Indeed, during prohibition, Florida remained the wettest state in the Union, maintaining its tourist-driven economy thanks to regular ocean shipments of “fish” curiously shaped like bottles of bootleg liquor.

Throughout the 1960s and '70s, drugs were sold on Duval Street with the kind of vocal salesmanship now relegated to \$5 Spring Break T-shirt hawkers. Though eventually the island was forced to clean up its act (thanks to a wonderfully devious scheme perpetrated by FBI agents dressed as karate enthusiasts), there exists today a common misconception that during Fantasy Fest, the laws are suspended in favor of an agreed-upon, no-holds-barred celebration that would make Hugh Hefner blush.

The truth, however, is a bit less exciting: On Friday and Saturday, Oct. 26-27, a barrier will be established around a few blocks of Duval Street and its adjoining streets, creating an official “Fantasy Zone” where revelers can carry open (plastic) containers of alcohol. Backpacks, coolers, water guns and replica weapons are banned for obvious reasons, while officers astride a herd of formidable, glossy-hocked police horses perform crowd control duties.

Technically, public nudity is illegal in Key West, but during Fantasy Fest that law in particular seems to stretch to about a millimeter before its breaking point, much to the delight of participants (and, sometimes, to the horror of a few wide-eyed families fresh off a Disney cruise ship whose travel agent neglected to mention their wholesome vacation would coincide with the raunchiest time of the year in the Keys). Body painting studios pop up along the length of Duval Street, with women ranging from nubile to decrepit lining up to have their torsos painted — which, Key West police officers urge people to remember, still does not actually constitute wearing a top.

Therefore, the city requests that all bare breasts (painted to appear as twin Basset hounds or otherwise) remain inside the designated Fantasy Zone.

This year's official Fantasy Fest: “Oh, The Games We Play!” begins with one of the event's only PG-rated parties, the Goombay Festival. All day Friday and Saturday, Oct. 19-20, Goombay sees the historic neighborhood of Bahama Village turned into a kind of folksy, exuberant block party, complete with food and craft stalls, though the heart of the festival is undoubtedly the nonstop musical performances. Featuring a wide range of acts including reggae, funk and gospel, the stage at the intersection of Petronia and Fort streets becomes an inclusive dance party for island residents and tourists just beginning their Fantasy Fest vacation. It's a joyful two days, accented by the delicious smell of street meat and the promise of all the frozen drinks in hollowed-out fruit your little lush heart could ever desire.

It can get hot out there in Bahama Village, so we recommend you hit the pool — the Havana Cabana Pool Party, to be exact. Cool off in the largest pool in Key West while DJ Top Jimmy spins the hottest beats and the Floridita food truck serves up authentic Cuban specials. The party runs from noon to 5 p.m. And admission is free, so you have extra mojito money.

Of course, no Fantasy Fest is complete without its special brand of monarchy. For those unfamiliar with the symbolic coronation of the King and Queen of Fantasy Fest, you're in luck: Everyone is welcome to attend the official Royal Coronation at the Truman Waterfront Amphitheater from 6-10 p.m. Friday, Oct. 19. In true Key West fashion, the election of this year's monarchy is less pomp and circumstance, more flamboyant fabulousness, with a three-course plated dinner, a two-hour stage show and appearances by local celebrities. Once crowned, the King and Queen (awarded for having raised the most money for Aids Help of Monroe County during their two-month campaigns) will preside over the rest of the week's parties, parades, galas and fetes.

After witnessing the crowning of the royal court, head over to Tiki House for the Freaky Tiki Party. Retro Freaks & Tiki Geeks promises sideshow monsters, oddities and more, all to the booming sounds of DJ Gyver getting freaky with the beats.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, your entertainment options for the week are also on the sultry side. From Oct. 19-26, “Madame

DuJour's Magical Game Show and Burlesque Experience” at the Waterfront Playhouse will see Key West's best burlesque performers team up with world-renowned magician Nick Locapo and special guests bearing saucy names like Moana Amour and Sofia Luna. In a production that is one part game show, two parts burlesque and all parts fun, audience members will have a chance to win actual cash and prizes. The show runs for six nights only at the beautiful Waterfront Playhouse, and after the success of last year's “Taking it Off to See the Wizard: A Burlesque Parody,” it's sure to sell out fast.

Sunday's ever-popular Zombie Bike Ride is certainly not to be missed. What started as a rag-tag bunch of weirdos careening down South Roosevelt in zombie makeup has evolved into a traffic-stopping, national news-covered theme ride from East Martello to downtown Duval Street. Though the event has become less of a “ride” than a start-and-stop, slow-moving parade of fantastically zombified riders trying not to crash into one another, bike traffic along the 4-mile route usually decongests enough toward the end of the highway to allow for a friendly breeze or two. There are no limits or expectations for costumes; some riders look ready for their next scene on “The Walking Dead,” while others might smear some fake blood on their shirt and call it a day. But the more effort you put into your costume, the better, since families camp out in chairs along the way, cheering and filming. It's a unique spectacle to be sure.

Monday, Oct. 22, starts out with a bang — of a starter's gun, that is — when the annual Heroes and Villains Run/Walk 5K takes off from the Southernmost Beach Café. Dress up as your favorite hero or villain, make your way to the finish line as fast as you can and you'll be in the running (pun intended) for prizes including Funniest Costume, and Most Creative Costume. The run ends, as all runs should, with a sunset beach party, after which the beach transforms into a pig roast. Forty-five bucks gets you access to a buffet chock full of Cuban classics like sofrito, yucca, tostones, picadillo, and of course, roast pork. Tickets for the luau can be purchased at www.keystix.com.

On the other side of the spectrum, the unofficial but always titillating Kinky Karnival at First Flight Island Restaurant & Brewery on Whitehead Street kicks off at 8 p.m. Monday, Oct. 22, with costumes required for entry — and make no mistake, these are some serious fetishists. The longstanding tradition has resulted

in Monday night's becoming an informal Fetish Night island-wide. Keep an eye out for pop-up BDSM parties (how many times have you heard that one at home?) and enjoy wandering around the Fantasy Zone for your first glimpse at just how far some people try to push the boundaries of "I swear, officer, I'm not naked."

If you want to celebrate the Free Love movement without the actual love part of it, you should find yourself at the Green Parrot for the increasingly cult-status Beatles Band. Past Beatles tribute shows have had rabid fans swinging from the rafters as they danced, laughed and sang along to a set list pulled from decades of Lennon and McCartney hits. Come dressed as your favorite Beatle or in a theme costume and help turn the Parrot into the 1967 Summer of Love. Shows are at 5:30, 9 and 11 p.m.

Build up your good karma for the week by attending the Womankind Brazaar at 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 22, at the Key West Theater. Shake your groove thing and support Womankind during its signature decorated bra fundraiser, featuring a high energy live auction of sensational designs with a 1970s game show motif. The night will include a hilarious host, game show participants (it could be you), spectacular surprises and "booby" prizes, a "rack" sale of artisan-crafted bras and a pre-auction disco welcome with sweet treats and libations. Find out who'll be "Breast in Show"; come as you are or break out your bell bottoms, butterfly collars and gold lame and make a deal on your favorite fabulous professionally created bra, knowing your partying is supporting preventative care for local ta-tas and Womankind's mission of affordable healthcare for all.

Tuesday, Oct. 23, offers up a whole range of festivities, including an animal-themed all-you-can-drink SPCA party, the official Fantasy Fest Poster Signing party, a Beach Bash featuring Patrick and the Swazyees



COURTESY PHOTO
Courtney Wilson and Jenn Stefanacci serving up drinks at Fantasy Fest 2017.

and of course, the always epic Captain Tony's Party in Plaid, a.k.a. the perfect excuse for having held onto those horrifying madras pants for all these years.

For a more obvious thrill, there's also the Men of Labare Tightly Whitey Party, featuring the all-male Adonis-like revue made famous by the Magic Mike movies. Dress code encourages sexy white underwear (not an oxymoron, contrary to what Cosmopolitan and GQ have to say). If it was good enough for national treasure Channing Tatum, it's more than good enough for Key West. Tickets are limited.

One of this author's favorite non-officially sponsored events is Tutu Tuesday, a multi-stop, multi-venue, roving spectacle of tulle and fluff. on Tuesday, Oct. 23. And since this year is its 10th anniversary, you

can expect a blowout unlike any other.

Local bar entrepreneur Chris Shultz and his best bud DJ Jevne Miller created the Tutu Party over the last decade have watched it evolve into one of the most outrageous and well-attended events of Fantasy Fest.

This year's "Decade-Dance" is shaping up to be the most original and best party yet. Schultz and Miller are combining Chris' new bar, General Horseplay, with the adjacent 22&Co/Teaser's/Club nightclub complex, including the spacious courtyard in between. The organizers have somehow managed to convince the dancing ladies of Teasers to take the night off, which means the stages will be open for all to dance upon. Artistic genius Marky Pierson is on hand once again to create a labyrinth of passageways to explore every inch of this historic collaboration. There's a pre-party at Mary Ellen's Bar and shot stops at First Flight and Tiki House.

The infamous Tutu Party DJs will offer up something for everyone in the various rooms of the party complex, and this year they are adding live music in the courtyard.

There have been more than 2,000 people at this event the past two years, and somehow, they have found a way to make room for more. So, fish out that tutu and put on your dancing shoes. This is a Fantasy Fest party you don't want to miss.

Fantasy Fest really gets going Wednesday-Saturday, Oct. 24-27, with multiple themed parties (some official, some unsanctioned) happening throughout downtown. Some of the legendary ones: Wednesday's Pet Masquerade, where a procession of costumed pets and their incredibly crafty owners make their way across a stage at the Truman Waterfront Amphitheater to compete for prizes; Wharfstock, where prototypical pirate hangout Schooner Warf transforms itself

into a psychedelic love-child groove fest, complete with body painting contest; the 36th annual Headdress Ball on Thursday, Oct. 25, where the phrase "the closer the headdress, the closer to God" gets tested out for serious cash prizes; an all-day, all-night street fair with crafts, food, and last-minute souvenirs; the 17th annual Living Art Expo, where the best "human canvases" are awarded thousands of dollars; a White Party, Red Party, Blue Party, Pink Party, Toga Party, Slumber Party, Kinky Couple's Party, Glow Party, Pirate Party, Foam Party and Pajama Party; and, of course, the Dungeon of Dark Secrets party, which is exactly what it sounds like.

There are also two massive parades: the first, the locals-favorite Masquerade March, happens Friday, Oct. 26, and draws thousands of costumed pedestrians who parade themselves through downtown to the delight of onlookers handing out shots and beads. Then, there's Saturday's pièce de résistance: The Official Fantasy Fest Parade, a confetti-throwing, band-booming, float-filled colorful masterpiece to end the festival on a very, very loud note.

If you're still alive by Sunday, congratulations! May we suggest scraping yourself off the floor and attending the annual Fat Lady Sings Tea Dance at La Te Da. We have it on very good authority that yes, there will be a fat lady present, yes, she will sing, and that afterwards, all of it, finally, will be over.

At least, until we learn the theme for next year.

The full list of events, including tickets, start times and contact info for all official Fantasy Fest events can be found at www.fantasyfest.com. Those interested in attending any of the week's unofficial events should utilize Facebook or www.fantasyfestparties.com. ■

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www.Danteskeywest.com
- Geiger Key Marina** 
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www.Geigerkeymarina.com
- Green Parrot Bar** 
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4-7 p.m. Monday-Thursday
4-5:30 p.m. Friday
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www.Greenparrot.com
- The Grand**
314 Duval St.
5-7:30 p.m.

- Half-price wine, cocktails and beer
Half-price appetizers
www.grandcafekeywest.com
- Half Shell Raw Bar**
231 Margaret St.
4:30-6:30 p.m.
2-for-1 drink specials
Special happy hour food menu
www.Halfshellrawbar.com
- Hard Rock Café** 
313 Duval St.
5-7 p.m. and 10 p.m. to closing
Half-price appetizers and drinks
www.hardrockcafe/keywest
- Hogfish Bar and Grill** 
6810 Front Street
4-6 p.m.
Drink specials and special happy hour menu
www.Hogfishbar.com
- Island Dogs Bar** 
505 Front St.
4-6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
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www.Islanddogsbar.com
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www.Keywest.lucysretiredsurfers.com
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www.Martinskeywest.com
- Mary Ellen's Bar** 
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5620 MacDonald Ave.
4-6 p.m.
Drink specials and special happy hour menu
www.Roostica.com
- Sand Bar Sports Grill** 
511 Greene St.
Check the website for daily specials
Sandbarkeywest.com
www.Sand Bar Sports Grill Key West on Facebook
- Santiago's Bodega**
207 Petronia St.
3-6 p.m.
Half-price drinks
\$5 tapas
www.Santiagosbodega.com
- Sidebar at Aqua** 
504 Angela St.
4-8 p.m.
\$5 well drinks, \$3.75 domestic beers
9 p.m.-close, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, drink specials
www.sidebarkeywest.com
- Southernmost Beach Café** 
1405 Duval St.
Sunday-Thursday
\$5 small bites bar men, \$5 draft beer, house wine, well drinks and house margaritas. www.Southernmostbeachcafe.com
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www.Tattoosandscarssaloon.com
- Tiki House** 
430 Greene St.
4-6 p.m.
2-for-1 wells, drafts and Zombies
www.tikihousekw.com
- Turtle Kraals**
231 Margaret St.
4:30-6:30 p.m.
Half off bottled beers, well drinks and house wines
Special happy hour menu
www.Turtlekraals.com
- Two Friends Patio Restaurant**
512 Front St.
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Early bird dinner specials
www.Twofriendskw.com
- Vinos on Duval**
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Sundays
\$5 mimosas
www.Vinosonduval.com
- Viva Saloon** 
903 Duval St.
4-6 p.m.
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www.Vivakeywest.com
- The Waterfront Brewery** 
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www.thewaterfrontbrewery.com
- Willie T's Restaurant and Bar** 
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www.Williets.com
- Wine-O at La Concha Hotel**
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www.Laconchakeywest.com
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The grounds of the iconic Custom House Museum at 218 Front St. become the official "Gateway to the Fantasy Zone" for Fantasy Fest 2018: "Oh, The Games We Play." From Oct. 24-27, revelers can avail themselves of refreshments, activities, information and epic selfie shots in front of a giant Fantasy Fest logo sculpture.

Custom House Museum: the official gateway and hub for Fantasy Fest 2018

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

Starting Wednesday, Oct. 24, and through Saturday, Oct. 27, the grounds of the iconic Custom House Museum at 218 Front St. will be an official "Gateway to the Fantasy Zone" for Fantasy Fest 2018: "Oh, The Games We Play."

The museum hosts a special "Royal Retrospective" exhibit through Oct. 29.

"The museum's location, its connection to the Keys arts community and the historic significance of the landmark building make the Custom House a perfect gateway for folks to gather as they enter this year's Fantasy Zone," says Fantasy Fest producer Nadene Grossman Orr.

"Key West Art & Historical Society's continued support, willingness and enthusiasm to join the fun make them a great event partner," she adds.

Gateway revelers can avail themselves of a Fantasy Fest information tent in front of the museum, where a festival concierge will have information about all things Fantasy Fest from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 11

a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

The hub will also include performance artists from 5-7 p.m., streamed music, vendors offering souvenir swag, a giant 12-by-16-foot 3-D Fantasy Fest logo sculpture for epic selfie shots, libation sampling from the event's many sponsors (including Tito's Handmade Vodka, Blue Chair Bay Rum, One with Life Tequila, Coca Cola, Monster Energy Drink and Dasani water) for sale.

The Custom House Museum's third annual "Royal Retrospective" exhibit is open during regular museum hours in the first-floor lobby. Curated and produced by Dennis Beaver and Cori Convertito, the exhibit takes a look back at decades of Key West Fantasy Fest royalty via memorabilia, keepsakes, photographs and posters.

From 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 18, the exhibit becomes the site for "A Royal Retrospective: A Look Back at the Kings & Queens of Fantasy Fest," an all-candidate party open to the public. There will be a cash bar and light appetizers, with 100 percent of the \$10 admission benefiting Aids Help of Monroe County. ■

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Its namesake never saw it, but Audubon House still worth a look

BY MAXINE LOPEZ-KEOUGH
Florida Weekly Correspondent

It's midway through the tour of Key West's stunningly pretty Audubon House and Tropical Gardens that the truth comes out: John James Audubon—famed naturalist painter, whose lifelike paintings of bird portraits line the walls of the museum—never actually lived in the Audubon House. But don't let this spoiler keep you from visiting; indeed, a visit to the Audubon House offers so much beauty, charm and historical interest, you'll be left feeling only that it was Audubon's loss that he was never able to inhabit such a magical place.

Amassing a fortune from treasure gathered from the ruins of shipwrecks might seem like a job description for a storybook pirate, but in 19th century Key West, it was a lucrative and respectable way to make a living. The busy passage between the Eastern Seaboard and the Gulf Coast was a dangerous place for ships to sail, and each year saw tens of boats wrecked on offshore reefs during the frequent storms that pummeled the area. "Finders Keepers" might not mean much today, but for those in the wrecking industry of Key West, it was law. When a ship ran aground, the first man to reach the boat became the "wreck master," who—after saving the crew and passengers, if possible—directed the salvaging of the ship and its cargo. Back on land, the recovered haul was auctioned off, with the wreck master taking the largest cut of the profits. It was a dangerous, highly competitive and regulated industry, the spoils of which helped solidify Key West as the richest city in the country by the mid-1800's.

For Captain John Huling Geiger, a maritime pilot whose ship wrecking success had made him one of the richest men in the Florida Keys, such wealth demanded a home of appropriate grandeur. In 1846, after the rest of the island was mostly flattened in a hurricane, Geiger chose a prominent lot on which to build his family's new home—a lavish American Classic Revival mansion of tropical wood at the intersection of Green and Whitehead streets, with an unobstructed view of the ocean (and any new potential ship wrecks.) It was a grand, busy estate encompassing 6 acres, home to Geiger, his wife, his children, and a number of slaves who, in addition to domestic chores, were made to assist in the wrecking business that fueled Geiger's wealth.

For over a century, Geiger's home remained in the family's possession, until Geiger's great-grandson, Capt. William Bradford Smith, took up residence. Smith, a Key West Harbor pilot, lived in hermit-like seclusion without indoor plumbing, electricity, or cooking facilities, and by the time of his death in 1956, the house had fallen into ruin. Slated for demolition, it was saved in 1958 by Mitchell and Frances Wolfson, who were compelled to purchase the property after hearing it was destined to become a gas station. The Wolfsons had heard the same folklore that speculated James Audubon might have conceived many of his bird portraits during a visit to the gardens of Dr. Benjamin Strobel, whose home was located on the property where the Geiger family man-



COURTESY PHOTO

Audubon work. The three-story home is filled with precious antiques and, of course, with Audubon's work, as well as information about the artist's life and career. An acre of lush tropical gardens surrounds the home, featuring hundreds of orchids, a koi pond, and a replica of the property's original 1850's outdoor kitchen building. Visitors are encouraged to wind their way through the quiet brick pathways, taking note of the rare tropical plants (carefully labeled for those without extensive botanical knowledge) and view the medicinal and herb garden, a staple of 19th century upscale homes. Though the museum and its grounds are located in the bustling downtown district, once inside the protective foliage of the grounds, the sights and sounds of the outside world are muffled. Visitors are transported back in time, to an island without tour buses or tee-shirt shops, where fame and fortune awaited any man brave enough to watch the sea for a wrecked ship, and beat his fellow wreckers to the prize. ■

sion would later be constructed.

The Wolfsons began a two-year process of painstaking renovation, the first historical renovation of its kind in Key West, at the end of which marked the rechristening of the Geiger home as The Audubon House Museum. They filled the house with antiques, including many items from the Geiger family, as well as numerous original hand-colored lithographs by Audubon. Today, Key West is known for having one of the most colorful and well-protected historical districts in the United States, with the highest density of historic frame buildings in the nation. Yet few who visit know that it was the Wolfsons' renovation of the Audubon House that began this now priceless movement to protect and preserve the island's oldest architecture.

To this day, the property is cared for through the Mitchell Wolfson Trust, and remains a reputable dealer of original

in the know

The Audubon House

- >> **Location:** 205 Whitehead St.
- >> **Hours:** 9:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
- >> **Tickets:** The museum offers discounted museum tickets to locals.
- >> **Contact:** For more information, call 305-294-2116 or visit www.audubonhouse.com.

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Michael Franti will headline the concert at Key West's newest concert venue, the Sunset Green Event Lawn.

COURTESY PHOTO

FRANTI

From page 1

porting all October headline dates.

The tour comes with the excitement of Franti's new album "Stay Human 2," which was released this summer. The record is influenced by Franti's new self-directed documentary "Stay Human," which has won an array of awards while on the festival circuit, including the RWJ Barnabas Health Award at the 2018 Asbury Park Music and Film Festival, the Audience Award at the 2018 Nashville Film Festival, the Audience Award and the Voice for Humanity Award at the 2018 ILLUMINATE Film Festival and the Soul in Cinema Award at the 2018 Maui Film Festival. The film will continue to screen at film festivals this winter, including upcoming public screenings at Woodstock Film Festival in Woodstock, N.Y., and Mill Valley Film Festival in San Rafael, Calif.

Of the tour, new music and film, Franti explains, "I've traveled the globe making music and throughout the years have always hoped it could inspire small steps toward making the world a better place. Struggling with the challenges of the world, I began filming my documentary to tell the stories of heroic everyday

people who helped me to discover more deeply what it means to be and stay human."

Franti began writing music as a way to process both the political landscape of the late 1980s and the unique sounds and ideas of his Bay Area upbringing. In 1994, Franti formed Michael Franti & Spearhead. Touring with his band, Franti continued to notice inequality and injustice both at home and abroad. The band released its seminal "Stay Human" album in 2000, reflecting on the unjust nature of the death penalty among other themes, to make sense of our common humanity in juxtaposition to near-constant violations of human rights.

Franti released his first self-directed documentary, "I Know I'm Not Alone," in 2005 to widespread critical acclaim. The film depicts his mission for peace in the Middle East, with a focus on the human cost of war. Franti visited warzones in Iraq, Israel and Palestine, again finding common connection, playing music to both soldiers and civilians regardless of affiliation.

Michael Franti & Spearhead continue to foster the community both on and off stage and with Do It For The Love, a wish-granting foundation that brings those with life-threatening illnesses, veterans and children with severe challenges to concerts.

His recent musical projects have

in the know

Michael Franti and Spearhead

- >> Sunset Green Event Lawn
- >> 3820 N. Roosevelt Blvd
- >> Monday, Oct. 22
- >> Doors open at 6 p.m.
- >> Show at 8 p.m.
- >> Tickets are available at www.keywestconcertseries.com

included the Billboard No. 1 single "The Sound of Sunshine" (2010) and full-length releases "All the People" (2013) and "SOULROCKER" (2016), which topped the Billboard rock album charts at No. 4 and No. 5, respectively.

As the fifth concert to be announced for the upcoming season at Sunset Green Event Lawn, Rams Head promotions is excited to welcome Michael Franti & Spearhead.

Sunset Green Event Lawn is a new multipurpose event space at 24 North Hotel in Key West. Surrounded by luxurious pools and lush greenery, Sunset Green Event Lawn provides the ultimate escape to induce the Key West lifestyle. Be there on Monday, Oct. 22, when Sunset Green will transform into a music venue providing food, drinks, state-of-the-art sound and production creating the ultimate concert experience. ■

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KEY WEST GALLERY GUIDE



Andy Thurber: Paris with Cayo Hueso Spice at Gallery on Greene

Opening reception 5-8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 20

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

As a child, Andy Thurber marveled at the Conchs (Key West locals) who lived their entire lives without crossing the Cow Key Channel Bridge. For them, Key West was enough, and nothing would make them leave.

Andy has broken that barrier and has now been on an airplane for the first time in his life. And he did it in spectacular fashion by traveling to Paris.

He spent two weeks in what he called a dream come true painting the "City of Lights."

"I was full of adrenaline and did some of my best work right there on the streets of Paris," he says. The experience he adds, "has made my Key West art more luminous. I grew so much seeing other light and another culture."

His exhibit at the Gallery on Greene is exciting and full of the rapture he felt in Paris and brought back with him. Andy

and wife Anne Marie recently moved to Micanopy and are homesick for the people of Key West and the affinity they feel for the beauty and warm, friendly atmosphere of the Florida Keys.

As Andy says, "I left my heart here, and it will be broken until I come home."

Come to the opening reception of Andy's show from 5-8 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 20, and enjoy the traditional dance group Comparsa performing live at 7 p.m. ■

For more information:
The Gallery on Greene
305-304-2323

606 Greene St.

www.galleryongreene.com



Andy Thurber



"Paris with Cayo Hueso Spice"

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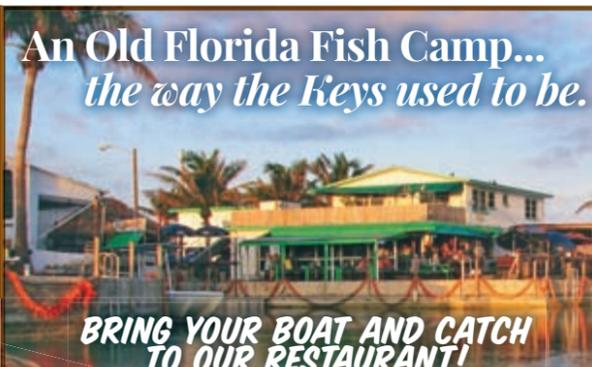


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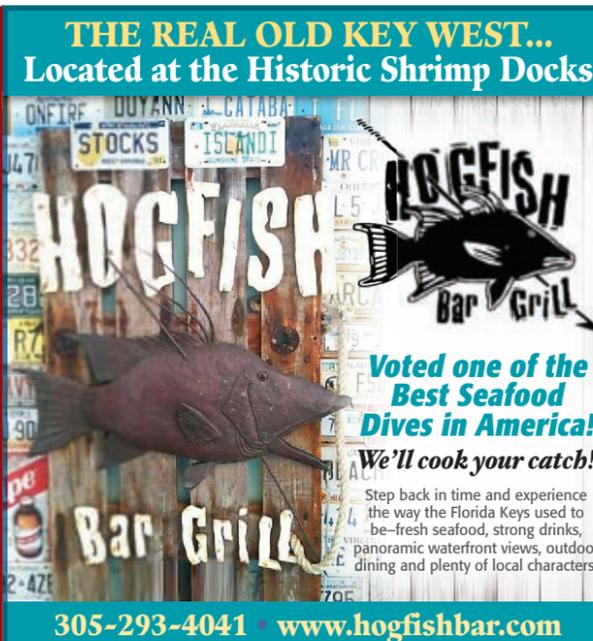
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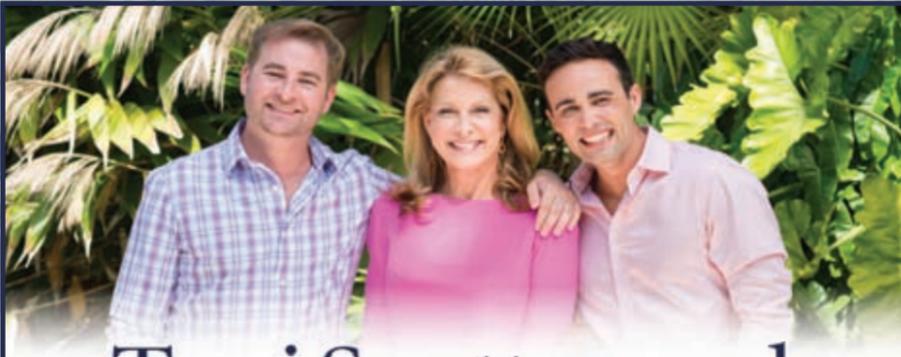
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