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ENJOY “FESTIVAL SEASON” WITH FUN EVENTS AND GREAT SAVINGS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS IN SARASOTA & HER ISLANDS

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DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS IN SARASOTA & HER ISLANDS

There’s a Festival for Everyone During the Summer Months in Sarasota, And Travelers Can Enjoy Special Deals at Area Hotels and Resorts

SARASOTA, Fla. (April 24, 2008) -- Sarasota & Her Islands, located on Florida’s Gulf Coast and known for white sand beaches and numerous cultural attractions, invites travelers of all ages to visit the destination during the summer months of “Festival Season”, when the streets come alive with music, food and fun for the whole family, and guests can take advantage of great deals and savings at area hotels and resorts.

Adding a twist to the classic beach vacation, Sarasota offers its visitors numerous festivals and events over the summer months ranging from the Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week and Forks & Corks Culinary Event for the food lover in all of us; to the Sarasota Youth Opera Festival, Off Shore Grand Prix Races, the Banyan Theater Company line-up and 30 Days of Discovery at a variety of local museums.

Festivals Abound in Sarasota During The Summer Months

Sarasota Youth Opera Festival May 9-10, 2008

After an exciting year during which they toured Italy, the Sarasota Youth Opera returns to present the U.S. premiere of *The Hobbit*. The prequel to *The Lord of the Rings*, the opera recounts how the comfort-loving Bilbo Baggins, unwillingly dragged into a heroic quest, accidentally acquires the golden ring of power. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for students, and a \$50 Family Pack is available for two adults and four students. Tickets may be purchased by calling 941.366.8450 or online at www.sarasotaopera.org.

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Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week - May 27- June 8, 2008

The Sarasota Convention and Visitor's Bureau (SCVB) announces the third annual "Savor Sarasota" Restaurant Week, now extended to run nearly two full weeks, from May 27-June 8, 2008, culminating in the new "Forks & Corks" culinary festival as the grand finale. This 13-day dining event will showcase Sarasota's chefs and the eateries, which have helped the city earn the distinction of having one of the highest concentrations of Zagat-rated restaurants in Florida. The SCVB has currently recruited over 30 restaurants to participate in the third year of the event, during which patrons will be able to enjoy multi-course meals at participating restaurants for \$15 per person for lunch and \$25 per person for dinner. For more information about the event, the participating restaurants and to make reservations visit www.savorsarasota.com.

Forks & Corks Culinary Event - June 5 - 8, 2008

Showcasing deliciously diverse cuisine from the independent restaurants, known as The Sarasota-Manatee Originals, this new epicurean event will be set amidst the University of South Florida and the stunning John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. From June 5 to 8, the Forks & Corks world-class weekend of food & wine entices participants to dine, drink and delight at dinners, a late night soiree, interactive seminars and a grand tasting with food demonstrations. Additionally there will be live entertainment, children's activities and a charity auction to benefit Meals On Wheels in Sarasota and Manatee counties and The Ringling Museum of Art's children's educational programs. The celebration will be the finale of a week of restaurant festivities during the Sarasota Convention and Visitors Bureau's "Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week". For all ticket information visit www.freshoriginals.com/forksandcorks/.

Banyan Theater Company - June 26 - August 24, 2008

The Banyan Theater Company brings meaningful theater to Sarasota this summer with:

- A Moon for the Misbegotten, by Eugene O'Neill, June 26-July 13
- True West, by Sam Shepard, July 17 - August 3
- The Clean House, by Sarah Ruhl August 7 - August 24

For ticket information visit www.banyantheatercompany.com or call 941.351.8000.

Off Shore Grand Prix Races - June 28 - July 6, 2008

Now in its 24th year, the Grand Prix Festival brings together many nationally recognized sponsors, as well as dozens of local supporters. This year's festival is presented by the Suncoast Foundation for the Handicapped. The Festival Kickoff Party to the Sarasota Reds Baseball Game and Fireworks Night to the Bike Show, all lead up to the main event, the Annual Suncoast

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Offshore Grand Prix Boat Race on Lido Beach. For all events, travelers can visit www.suncoastoffshore.org or call (941) 371-8820 ext. 1800.

30 Days of Discovery - Throughout the month of September

During September, area museums will be featuring a special "2 for 1" offer on admission to all residents of the state of Florida for the "30 Days of Discovery." Participating museums include the following: Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Crowley Museum and Nature Center, Mote Aquarium, Historic Spanish Point, G. WIZ, The Hands-On Science Museum, South Florida Museum and The Sarasota Jungle Gardens. Visit www.sarasotafl.org for accommodations specials and more.

Travelers to Sarasota Enjoy Special Deals and Discounts During the Summer Months

In conjunction with the numerous events and festivals, many Sarasota hotels and resorts are also offering special rates during the summer months.

Longboat Key Club offers a "MidWeek Memories" package that entitles guests whom stay three nights to get the third night at a 50 percent discount or guests whom stay four nights get the fourth night free. These packages are available from April 6, 2008 - December 15, 2008. Travelers can visit www.longboatkeyclub.com or call 800-237-5545 to book their stay.

The Colony Beach & Tennis Resort, located on Longboat Key, is offering a three day/ two night package; available May 1 - September 30, 2008 (blackout July 1 - 6). This package includes accommodations in a one or two-bedroom suite, welcome gift from Tastebuds Gourmet Market & Wine Shop, daily breakfast for each adult and a \$100 dining credit for use in any of the three Colony Restaurants or Gourmet Market. Package can be booked by going online to www.colonybeachresort.com/arts or by calling 941.383.6464 ext. 2187.

ResortQuest is offering two specials throughout the summer.

Travelers booking a three nights stay will receive the fourth night free with booking code INT 8FE. Additionally, the "Photos in the Sand" package includes a session with a professional photographer beachside at sunset, two 8x10 and 5x7 photos, a CD of all proofs and a \$50 gift card to a local supermarket. To receive this package's amenities use booking code PKG 8PS at time of booking. Travelers can visit www.ResortQuestSWFL.com/thebeach or call 800-237-9505 to reserve their stay.

Hyatt Regency Sarasota has "Sunshine on Sale" for the summer months.

The minimum length of stay is four nights when the guest buys three nights they get the fourth night free. "Sunshine on Sale" is effective June 1 - Dec 31, 2008. For more information on all Hyatt's summer specials and packages, visit www.sarasota.hyatt.com or call 800-233-1234.

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La Siesta Condominiums are offering a \$60.00 per week off-season discount to all guests during the summer months. Book your stay at www.lasiestacondos.com or call 941-349-6454.

Captiva Beach Resort offers a “Beach Escape for Two.” This package includes three nights lodging in a suite with two queen beds and full kitchen, a bottle of wine upon arrival, breakfast for two at the Word of Mouth Restaurant & Bakery, three days rental for two beach chairs and a beach umbrella, dinner for two at one of four premier restaurants, one in-room breakfast delivery basket and two-one-hour-in-room massages for \$385 per person. Advanced reservations are required and can be booked at www.captivabeachresort.com or by calling 800-349-413.

Sarasota and her string of eight islands are located along Southwest Florida’s Gulf Coast between Tampa and Ft. Myers. Sarasota and Her Islands is comprised of Sarasota, Longboat Key, Lido Key, St. Armands Key, Manasota Key, Siesta Key, Casey Key, Englewood, Nokomis, North Port, Osprey and Venice. In addition to sandy beaches, Sarasota and Her Islands also offer numerous cultural and ecological attractions. For more information on saving and discovering in Sarasota, call the Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau at 800-233-5635 or visit <http://www.sarasotafl.org/festivals/>