



SARASOTA AND HER ISLANDS HOSTS LARGEST ANNUAL VALENTINE'S DAY VOW RENEWAL CEREMONY

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Contact:

Erin Duggan

Sarasota & Her Islands Convention & Visitors Bureau

941-955-0991 ext. 108 Cell: 941-356-0432

eduggan@sarasotafl.org

FIND PASSION IN SARASOTA DURING THE ROMANTIC MONTH OF FEBRUARY

SARASOTA, Fla. (January, 2009) -- February is a magical time of year when Valentine's Day inspires romantics from all over to travel to Sarasota and Her Islands, Florida to say "I do" one more time during a special beachside vow renewal ceremony, or to luxuriate at one of Sarasota's many hotels and resorts. With this exquisitely romantic event as well as a host of romance packages for visiting couples, Sarasota makes it impossible not to say YES beachside at sunset on "heart day" and experience the abundance of performing and visual arts, fine dining and inspiring natural beauty of the destination.

Say "I Do" Again in Sarasota and Her Islands on Valentine's Day

Every year on Valentine's Day, over 500 couples gather on Siesta Key Beach in Sarasota – one of the only places in the world where the soft, sugary sand is 99 percent pure quartz – to renew their vows of marriage in a romantic beachside ceremony at sunset. The "Say 'I Do' Again: A Renewal of Marriage Vows" event takes place at 6:00 pm on Saturday, February 14, and is open to anyone who would like to attend – locals and visitors alike. As the sun sinks over the crystal waters of Siesta Key, couples dig their toes into the sugary-white shores and reaffirm promises given on their wedding days.

Siesta Key Beach offers a scenic spot for photos, and after the ceremony couples can enjoy live music, a long walk on the beach, a beach-side barbecue or can join in the Valentine Stroll to Siesta Key Village, where shopkeepers stay open and there are plenty of outdoor cafes for a romantic Valentine's Day meal.

While registration is not mandatory, couples can pre-register for event by calling 941-861-7275, and with a \$5 registration fee will receive a special personalized certificate and flowers.

Romance Packages Abound for an Enchanting Valentine's Day Beach Getaway

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For those couples looking to escape for a Valentines Day getaway, Sarasota & Her Islands also offers a variety of enchanting romance packages for couples to enjoy at many of the local hotels and resorts.

The Captiva Beach Resort White Sand and Sunsets Getaway package features three nights lodging in a suite with a king bed and full kitchen; two one-hour, in-room massages from a licensed massage therapist; and three days rental for two beach chairs and a beach umbrella. This package also includes dinner for two at one of four premier restaurants including Javier's, Coaster's, Bella Roma and Café Baci, breakfast for two at the famous Broken Egg Restaurant and one breakfast-in-bed delivery basket.

The Captiva Beach Resort offers 20 newly renovated guest rooms and suites with private baths, pillow top beds and full kitchens and living areas. Captiva Beach Resort's White Sand and Sunsets Getaway package pricing is available Feb. 1 - April 15, 2009. Rates are \$565 per person, based on double occupancy, and are subject to space availability and do not include taxes or gratuities. For more information please call 941.349.4131 or visit www.captivabeachresort.com.

The Cypress, a downtown bed and breakfast inn situated in a tropical garden beneath sheltering oaks, palms, and mango trees, offers five uniquely furnished sleeping quarters, each with a private full bath in a charming Florida Vernacular house overlooking beautiful Sarasota Bay. The welcoming front porch with its obligatory comfortable rocking chairs invites guests to an amazing free show that takes place every evening - the golden sun slipping down into Sarasota Bay between sailboats standing at attention on the still water.

Room rates range between \$259.- \$289. per night Accommodations include full gourmet breakfast, early evening hors d'oeuvres with inspired refreshments. You will find fresh flowers in your room and homemade cookies before you snuggle in for the night.

Celebrate Valentine's Day at this downtown delight with all that downtown Sarasota has to offer...just a stroll away to art galleries, fine shopping boutiques, dining, theater or opera. For reservations call 941-955-4683 or visit www.cypressbb.com.

Opera lovers can experience the opulent elegance of the historic Sarasota Opera House where the Winter Festival performances of Puccini's Tosca or Donizetti's Elixir of Love will satisfy even the most robust romantic cravings. (For more, visit www.sarasotaopera.org)

The AmericInn Hotel Suites Ultimate Romance Getaway from 169.99 per night offers a chance to treat yourself and that special loved one to a romantic getaway in one of their luxurious king whirlpool suites and enjoy their trademark AmericInn Perk breakfast. This special Valentine's Day Package also includes a \$50.00 Gift Certificate to Marina Jack's Bay Front Bar and Restaurant on the Sarasota Bayfront, bath salts, lotions and a bottle of champagne to enjoy as you relax together in the outdoor heated pool and hot tub. Located near I-75, AmericInn isn't far

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from the action whether in town, the beach or the relaxing natural beauty of nearby Myakka State park. Mention the special promotion code: PKG1 when you call for your reservation at 1-800-396-5007 or visit www.AmericinnSarasotaHotel.com.

Sarasota and Her Islands are blessed with Zagat-rated, locally-owned restaurants that offer uniquely tasty experiences. Local chef and restaurateur Paul Mattison is offering a special Valentine's Evening of Romance at each one of his three restaurants – Mattison's City Grille in downtown Sarasota, Mattison's Riverside at Twin Dolphin Marina in Bradenton, and Mattison's Forty One in south Sarasota. A designer bouquet of a dozen red roses, champagne aperitif, a bottle of wine and a four course gourmet meal topped by a decadent chocolate espresso torte are what awaits the lucky couple who places their reservation before Feb 11 by calling (941) 921-3400. The payment of \$185 per couple can also be made on line at www.Mattisons.com.

Stroll off the extra chocolate with a visit to the historic grounds and collections of the John and Mable Ringling Museum. The Triumph of Marriage, an exhibition of Italian Renaissance wedding chests from Tuscan triumphal ceremonies, opens on February 14 running through April 14, 2009. Known as cassoni, these chests were decorated with images of battle and triumph to commemorate and celebrate the Renaissance marriage. The exhibition highlights the complexity and invention of these works by placing them within the context of Italian Renaissance décor. While on the grounds of the Ringling Museum, don't miss Ca d'Zan, the historic home of famed circus magnate John Ringling and his wife Mable, meticulously designed and decorated to be their winter love nest.

True big top fans won't want to miss the renowned Ringling Circus Museum there as well. They may even go out of their way to catch a live performance of world-class circus artistry performed every February under the big top of Florida's Famous Circus Sarasota. (For show times and tickets, visit www.CircusSarasota.org.)

There is so much to do. Sarasota and Her Islands features something for those seeking a private, romantic escape as well as a little more stimulation and adventure. An infinity of diversions are found in Sarasota and Her Islands comprised of Sarasota, Longboat Key, Lido Key, Siesta Key, Casey Key, Venice, Manasota Key, Englewood and North Port.

To say "I do" again and feel the passion for life in Sarasota and Her Islands, call (800) 522-9799 or visit www.sarasotafl.org.