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SARASOTA'S SIESTA BEACH RANKED THIRD IN AMERICA BY DR. BEACH

FLORIDA'S BEACHES TAKE THREE TOP SPOTS IN TOP 10 LIST

SARASOTA, Fla. (May 30, 2008) -- Sarasota & Her Islands, located on Florida's Gulf Coast and known for sugar-white sand beaches and numerous cultural attractions, is proud to announce that Siesta Key Beach was named the third top beach in America by coastal expert Dr. Stephen Leatherman, a.k.a. "Dr. Beach."

Leatherman unveiled his internationally-recognized list of the Top 10 U.S. Beaches live via satellite from Caladesi Island State Park in the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area last Thursday.

Two other Florida beaches honored by Leatherman this year include number one-ranked Caladesi Island State Park in the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area, and ninth-ranked Cape Florida State Park in Key Biscayne, near Miami.

"This recognition acknowledges a remarkable area of the state. With more than 1,200 miles of unparalleled coastline to explore in Florida, it isn't surprising that three Florida beaches have impressed Dr. Beach and made it into his top 10 list," said Governor Charlie Crist.

Siesta Key Beach is 99% quartz and has also been previously ranked as the finest, whitest sand beach in the world. Just steps away is Siesta Village, playing host to Sarasota's myriad offerings, from candlelit dining to beach boutiques and live music.

"We are thrilled to be included in "Dr. Beach's" Top 10 U.S. Beaches, stated Virginia Haley, president of Sarasota & Her Islands Convention and Visitors Bureau. "We hope that through the support of "Dr. Beach," travelers will visit Sarasota and experience the cultural, ecological, culinary and eclectic attractions that are also offered when exploring the destination."

Summer Lodging Deals

Travelers who venture to the white sand beach of Siesta Key have an array of valuable lodging packages to choose from. The Captiva Beach Resort, located just steps away from Siesta Beach, is offering a "Beach Escape for Two" package that includes three nights lodging in a suite; bottle of wine upon arrival; breakfast for two at the Word of Mouth Restaurant & Bakery; dinner for two at one of four premier Sarasota restaurants and two complimentary in-room massages. The package is available from May 1 to September 30, 2008, and starts at \$385 per person. For booking information, call (800)-349-4131 or visit www.captivabeachresort.com.

Tropical Breeze Resort & Spa, also located on Siesta Key, is running a "Dollar Special" deal through August. Guests who book three nights can purchase a fourth for just \$1. Additionally,

SARASOTA

—AND HER ISLANDS—

the “Teacher’s Special” deal offers 30% off rates to teachers for a three night stay during the week (Sunday to Thursday). For booking information, call (800)-300-2492 or visit www.tropicalbreezeinn.com.

At the Bay Oaks Condominiums on Siesta Key, select owners are willing to give 10% off one-week rentals, and 15% off two weeks or more, from Mid-June through September, 2008. For rental information, call (800)-671-6257, or visit www.bayoaksonsiestakey.com.

Sarasota and her string of eight islands are located along Southwest Florida’s Gulf Coast between Tampa and Ft. Myers. Known as Florida’s “Cultural Coast,” Sarasota offers visitors an atmosphere of culture and casual elegance; a place to unwind in style in an authentic beach town. While many are drawn to Sarasota for the sugar-white sands and colorful Gulf sunsets, visitors also find a whole other world to enjoy, beyond the beaches. From the exploring the history of the circus at the Ringling Campus, to the acoustic acclaims of the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, visitors to Sarasota can enjoy the relaxing atmosphere of a beach side bungalow just minutes from renowned cultural amenities. For more information on saving and discovering in Sarasota, call the Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 522-9799 or visit www.sarasotafl.org.