

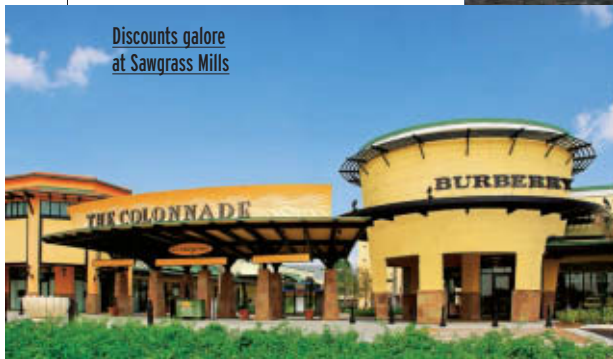
## Meet the locals



## 1 GATOR SPOTTING

From pelicans flying overhead to iguanas sunning themselves along the waterfront, the Floridian city of Fort Lauderdale is home to animals galore. Make like you're in a film and hop on an airboat at Sawgrass Recreation Park for a tour of the Everglades. Here you'll spot turtles and massive alligators as they glide up next to you. Scary stuff! It costs from £19 for adults and £10 for kids (Evergladestours.com). Florida is also home to Butterfly World, which houses about 20,000 of the beautiful creatures – adult entry is £24, children are £18 (Butterflyworld.com). Meanwhile, Flamingo Gardens And Wray Botanical Collection is home to native animals such as snakes and otters, as well as the pink birds. Adult entry costs £16, and children £10 (Flamingogardens.org).

## Discounts galore at Sawgrass Mills



## 2 SAVVY SHOPPING

Las Olas Boulevard is packed with upmarket boutiques and restaurants – it's where the rich and beautiful shop and eat. For something more laid-back, try the wholesome O-B House and have the Stranded Twice – two fresh tortillas heaped with black beans and mahi fillet, £14 (O-bhouse.com). Want to do some serious shopping? Head to sprawling outlet mall Sawgrass Mills and grab bargains from brands such as Burberry, Prada, plus Levi's from just £30 (Sawgrassmills.com).

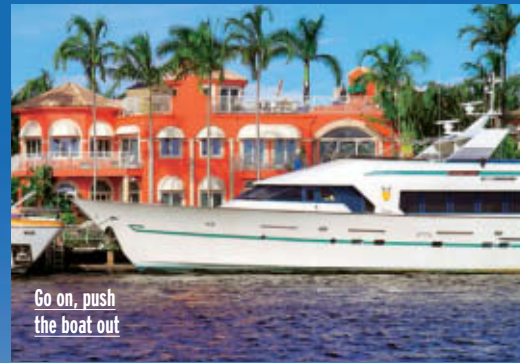
## Florida was a hit with Laura and her family



## 3 AMERICA'S VENICE

Built around mansion-lined canals, you'll spot plenty of super-yachts in Fort Lauderdale, while to the east, the Atlantic Ocean meets sandy beaches. Head downtown and along the Riverwalk to Stranahan House – the oldest building in the county, built in 1901 (Stranahanhouse.org). Next hit the Museum of Discovery And Science. Filled with hands-on exhibits, you can pretend to be a weather reporter and create your very own tornado. Adult entry costs £13, children £10 (Mods.org).

## Go on, push the boat out



## 5 SHRIMP FEASTS

At 23 miles long, Fort Lauderdale Beach has a lovely prom and loads of restaurants. Bubba Gump Shrimp Company does seriously amazing grub – Shrimper's Heaven has four kinds of fried shrimp plus fries and dips for £17, while the kids' three-course menu costs £6 (Bubbagump.com). Pompano Beach is perfect for little ones, and further north on Deerfield Beach, you get free surf lessons on Saturdays (Islandwatersports.com).

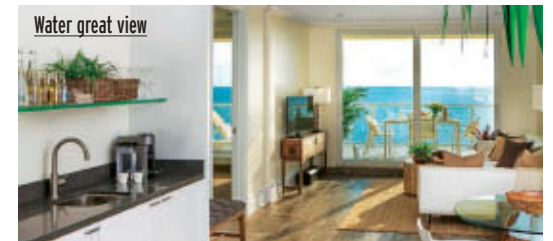
## Hubba Bubba! The shrimp's amazing



## 6 LAZY DAYS

With its own section of beach and a lazy river water ride, the Pelican Grand Beach Resort sits right on the sand. The beds are super-comfy, but tear yourself away, sit on your balcony and watch the sunrise over the ocean. Then nab a rocking chair on the hotel's veranda and sip a Sunset Margarita signature cocktail, £10. Treat the kids to a strawberry ice cream – or any of the other 16 flavours – from The Emporium, a '50s-inspired coffee and ice-cream parlour. And try the grilled tuna, £22, in the hotel's smart restaurant Ocean 2000. Double rooms cost from £160 per night (Pelicanbeach.com).

## Water great view



# Seven reasons to visit... GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE

There's more for kids in the Sunshine State than just Mickey Mouse, says Fabulous' Laura Bond

## 4 PIRATE FUN

Half an hour from Fort Lauderdale, the Young At Art Museum in Davie, entry £11, was one of our toddler's highlights (Youngatartmuseum.org). With activities from playing make-shift instruments to puppet-making, you can lose an afternoon here. Another hit was the Bluefoot Pirate Adventures pirate cruise, £20 per person, where the kids dress up, sail and search for treasure (Bluefootpirates.com). For more themed fun, grab dinner at Mai-Kai – £38 will get you three courses while watching Polynesian fire-dancing (Maikai.com).



9.5 HOURS



-5 HOURS



\*Plan your trip at Sunny.org.  
\*Norwegian flies from London Gatwick from £159 one-way for adults, £86 for kids (Norwegian.com).

## Ahoy, matey: set sail on Bluefoot



## Pack it



Hat, £10, Accessorize



Playsuit, £18, Monsoon

## 7 MILLIONAIRE MANSIONS

See how the other half live by climbing aboard the Jungle Queen riverboat for a 90-minute tour and sail through millionaire's row. Sonny and Cher once had a home lining the Intracoastal Waterways, and it's still a hit with the super-rich, with houses worth up to £30million. Tours cost £20 for an adult, and £11 for a child (Junglequeen.com). A boat is also the best way to see Fort Lauderdale's spectacular jigsaw of canals, and you can hop on and off water taxis with an all-day ticket, £20 (Watertaxi.com). Be sure to stop at waterside restaurant Shooters for a well-deserved glass of wine, £6, and mac and cheese, £6, for the little ones (Shooterswaterfront.com).



## Sit back at Shooters after a busy day's sightseeing