



REGION

# STUART

## A TREASURED TOWN

by SUZANNE WENTLEY | photos provided by Martin County Chamber of Commerce

**W**ith flowering trees lining the streets, egrets in the air and a friendly population, charm abounds in Stuart, an understated yet sophisticated city just 45 minutes north of West Palm Beach.

Stuart's rich history - based on a past of treasure ship wrecks on its beaches and a unique geography that wraps itself around the St. Lucie River - proves an attraction for residents throughout the nation and world, who drive through the city's

roundabouts and visit its many waterfront parks most often in the wintertime.

But even during the less-crowded summer months, the appeal of Stuart- the "Sailfish Capital of the World" reaches far beyond its excellent fishing, unspoiled beaches and quiet but vibrant art culture. Thanks to the influx of high-class, seasonal visitors, this city has also established an award-winning, elegant-yet-casual dining scene.

"Martin County has always been exclusiv and high end, with visitors coming from all over the world with very discernin palates," said Gary Guertin, the chairma of the Martin County Convention an Visitor's Bureau. "Whatever we do, we' do first class. And we're understated Stua casual. The rules are different here. We'r not Palm Beach"

Indeed, in Stuart, the dinner dress an atmosphere are as relaxed as the warn ocean breeze. Named the "Most Beautifu

# Uncover the Eclectic.

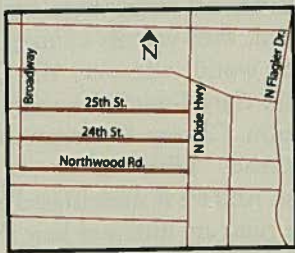
Savvy dining patrons will discover a diverse cultural offering of restaurant fare in Northwood Village. In a place where style and taste are completely individualistic, even the most persnickety of epicureans will satisfy their taste buds here. Once your palate is pleased – and it will be – venture out to the local shops, galleries and salons in the district to tantalize all your other senses. Fabrics and facials to feel, music and conversation to hear, coffee and candles to smell, art and antiques to see. Above all, in Northwood Village, you'll experience real faces and real places that give you the greatest sense of all – the heart warmth that comes from genuine passion.



Getting a taste of Northwood Village is just the start to feeding all your senses.

## NORTHWOOD Village

REAL FACES. REAL PLACES



West Palm Beach Community Redevelopment Agency  
[www.wpbcr.org](http://www.wpbcr.org) (561) 822-1550  
[www.northwoodvillage.org](http://www.northwoodvillage.org)

CRA Board Members, Chair: Mayor Lois Frankel;  
 Commissioners: William Moss, Molly Douglas, Jeri Muolo,  
 Isaac "Ike" Robinson, Jr., Kimberly Mitchell

### Allora

Melt-in-your-mouth, take-out pizza - or eat in, casually.

### Cafe Centro Piano Bar & Restaurant

Chic Italian with passion, especially when you dine curbside. Then, walk next door to enjoy the new piano bar – glorious chandeliers and hard wood floors accompany the beautiful sounds of the baby grand piano.

### Don Ramon's (3)

A newcomer to Northwood but not to West Palm Beach. Consistently delicious Cuban cuisine and delightful drinks, including exceptional mojitos, in the elegant bar area.

### Fresh Catch Seafood

Take out today's catch, fresh or prepared – or order special cuts of fish in advance. Also enjoy the best fried shrimp in town, great for party trays.

### Jade Kitchen (4)

Completely unexpected, inventive gourmet food. Great for a romantic evening or low-key gathering of friends under the bougainvilleas – or go art deco indoors.

### The Little Tea House (1)

Not just for High Tea lovers, this quintessentially quaint new stopover serves lunch, desserts and a selection of teas to take home.

### Mirjean Island Cuisine

A hidden Haitian delight, just off the beaten path. A new twist on take-out or an island style escape in the new dining area.

### Presto's Pizza

One of Northwood's oldest traditions for take-out and delivery pizza and other Italian classics, this easy-on-the-wallet eatery now offers eat-in dining in its newly renovated location. Don't miss one of the non-Italian best sellers on the menu – chicken wings!

### Sunset Bar & Grill (2)

Funky, stylish and urban, this neighborhood bistro offers eclectic elegance and personality plus. Highlights include walls lined in original art, patio lounging, juicy steaks, seafoods and a welcoming martini bar.

### Supé's Jamaican Restaurant

Surprise your palate with mouth-watering Island food. Don't miss the stewed chicken. Popular for take-out, but boasts a nice-sized, newly renovated dining area as well.

### This is it Cafe

From the same owners of the once legendary This Is It Pub, the Cafe serves up comfort foods galore, breakfast and lunch. Plus fresh whole turkeys roasted daily.

### World Famous Restaurant

Welcome to the new and improved original soul food restaurant in the neighborhood – soon to be "World Famous" for its fabulous new jazz lounge – comfortable, contemporary and uptown.

Small Town in America" in 2008 by the non-profit America in Bloom, this city is a gorgeous spot for the ultimate weekend getaway.

Many visitors tend to stay at the beachfront **Hutchinson Island Marriott Beach Resort and Marina**, 555 N.E. Ocean Boulevard, (772) 225-3700, or opt for one of the charming bed and breakfasts, like **Inn Shepard's Park**, located downtown at 601 S.W. Ocean Boulevard, (772) 781-4244.

From the Inn, stroll along the Riverwalk, a boardwalk that meanders along the St. Lucie River near the picturesque Roosevelt Bridge to discover the **Riverwalk Café and Oyster Bar**, 201 S.W. Saint Lucie Ave., (772) 221-1511. With large bay windows overlooking the sidewalk and a cozy bar featuring 140 wines - half available by the glass - regulars love the variety of fresh oysters, USDA-certified prime beef, wild salmon and crab cakes, which are made only of jumbo lump crab meat. Chef and Owner **Steve Feder** ensures that everything is fresh and without chemicals or processing that can cloud the taste of even the best prepared dishes. Intimate and great for dates, this 50-seat restaurant has been a popular spot for 12 years.

Around the corner downtown is **The Lyric Theatre**, a renovated playhouse built in 1926 that features top musical and theatrical performances throughout the year. Many take in a show before wandering over to **The Flagler Grill**, 47 SW Flagler Ave., (772) 221-9517. Honored by *Wine Spectator* every year since 1999 and the *Wine & Enthusiast* in 2007, this restaurant is as well known for its lengthy wine list as its exceptional menu. Signature items include the Reef Tuna, Yellow-Tail Snapper and New York Strip, and the Pear salad, made with vanilla-scented seasonal pears and warm goat cheese, is also divine. Owners **Paul and Linda Daly** often sport tropical shirts and greet each guest with a smile.

Another popular and sophisticated dining option right in downtown is **Gusto Italian Cuisine**, 301 Colorado Ave., (772) 287-3334 - where the professional staff is as authentically Italian as the cuisine. With thick accents under a chic



Previous page: Stuart was named the "Most Beautiful Small Town in America" in 2008 by the non-profit America in Bloom.

Top: Riverwalk Cafe & Oyster Bar offers Contemporary American cuisine in an casual, yet elegant setting.

Bottom: Stuart has been named the Sailfish Capital of the World.

chandelier lighting the often-packed dining room, servers offer daily specials and a hearty menu including Rack of Lamb and homemade pastas. The Risotto ai Funghi and the Grilled Calamari Steak appetizer are also favorites, said Owner **Maria Amato**. Those in the know also request a homemade limoncello to wash down their meal. Save room for a cannoli - unless you would prefer to stroll over to **Kilwin's Chocolates and Ice Cream**, at 31 S.W. Osceola St., (772) 223-6446.

Families would enjoy a trip to the Florida Oceanographic Coastal Center on Hutchinson Island before stopping into **Renato's Italian Ristorante**, 3720 SE Ocean Boulevard, (772) 219-9600, for a delicious lunch. Located in Sewall's Point, a small, peninsular town on the way to the beaches, Renato's is a long-time favorite for authentic, homemade cuisine. Sicilian owners **Renato and Josephine Maira** offer a variety of northern and southern Italian classics for lunch and dinner, including

popular dishes like the veal marsala, paninis and zuppa de pesce. Chef Renato, and their son, Alberto, who is also a chef here, make all the pastas, salads and sauces from scratch. Reservations are highly recommended, especially during the busy winter season.

**Encore Restaurant & Lounge**, 2875 SE Ocean Boulevard, (772) 286-6612, is a great way to end a peaceful day at one of the unspoiled beaches - especially one near the historical House of Refuge Museum at Gilbert's Bar, which explains the area's history of ships filled with gold wrecking along the area reefs. Just over the bridges from the museum, Encore Restaurant & Lounge owner and chef **Kyle Green** offers a variety of entrees and popular tapas, small plate items, from the Forest Mushroom Crepes with Alfredo sauce and truffle essence to Scallops Provencal to Grilled Brie with strawberries, citrus fruit, toasted cashews and honey. Live music is often featured on the patio, also where Iron Chef Mondays - held the first Monday of the month - is a fun, interactive cook-off

featuring secret ingredients like carrots, tuna or goat cheese.

Another restaurant that's perfect to enjoy the warm evening breeze here is **Ian's Tropical Grill**, located about 10 minutes north at 1205 N.E. Dixie Highway in Jensen Beach, (772) 334-4563. At Ian's, guests can chose from intimate indoor booths and tables surrounded by wine cork-covered walls or a seat in the peaceful palm garden. Owners **Paula and Eric Grutka** boast the "best fish on the Treasure Coast" with a menu that changes daily based on whatever is freshest from local farms and fishing boats. A winner of the *Wine Spectator* award for the past seven years, Ian's is known for its Surf and Turf with New York Strip medallions and grilled shrimp with a bleu cheese cream and cabernet reduction. The Day Boat Scallops, Kobe Beef and duck breast from Maple Leaf Farms are also winners.

Also in Jensen Beach is **11 Maple Street**, at 3224 N.E. Maple Street, (772) 334-7714, a top-quality dining experience tucked in a historic home along another waterway

in Stuart, the Indian River Lagoon. Owner **Margie Perrin** is proud to be named one of the top ten local eateries by the annual *Zagat* survey, thanks to an eclectic and extensive wine list and small plate dinners. They are known for the pan-fried corn in balsamic vinegar and wine and the tenderloin with Portobello mushrooms

Are you searching for traditional yacht club excellence? **The Harbor Grille** at Harborage Yacht Club, 955 NW Flag Ave. (772)-692-4000 ext. 3 is now offering lunch and dinner to non-members. Reservations are suggested as the club hosts private member only functions from time to time. Chef **Mark Muller** grew up in Stuart and offers some of the most mouth-watering options overlooking a 300-slip marina across the St. Lucie River from downtown. His Corn Chowder was recently named best soup by Taste of Martin County, an epicurean event that raised funds for a local charity. Open in the last year, the Harbor Grille is proof that the culture and dining scene in Stuart is only improving as its history deepens



Left: Historic Downtown Stuart is a gathering place for the young and old alike.

Above: If you are looking to experience the great outdoors, take a drive to Stuart.

Right: This charming neighborhood is located just 45 minutes north of West Palm Beach.

