

# LIFESTYLES

Lee & Collier Counties

Along Florida's Gulf Coast, to the south of Tampa Bay, lies a stretch that some call a natural paradise and others refer to it as their escape from the snow and cold. However, more trends are leaning towards calling the area - home.



COURTESY OF LEE COUNTY CVB

It's no surprise that this idyllic area is commonly known as the Paradise Coast. An aura of peace and relaxation permeates this tropical getaway located on the Gulf side of Florida.

Getting here>> The area is serviced by the Southwest International Airport in Fort Myers, which is one of the top 50 busiest airports in the U.S., providing efficient air transportation to 7.4 million passengers during 2009.

#### Did you know?

→ Lee County area ranked in the top 25% out of 366

Metropolitan Statistical Areas in terms of Personal Income (2008).

→ The 2008 median family income in Lee County was \$51,625.

→ Collier County is one of the fastest growing areas in the country and continues to have one of the strongest economies in the State of Florida, with one of the lowest unemployment rates, highest rates of job creation, and average wages in the top quartile of all Florida counties.

LEE COUNTY - Population 593,136 (2008)

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Why not relocate to a place where you can golf on lush greens in January, fish in sun-sparkling waters in February, spend time with family and friends on 78-degree March days and still be part of a thriving and growing business community? A place with less congestion, less crime and lower taxes. Some of the top businesses in the country have already opened their doors in Lee County.

The Economic Development Office of Lee County (EDO) works in partnership with local cities to identify business needs and provide support. The goal of this program is to create the best environment for business growth, competitiveness and prosperity, which in turn leads to job creation, capital investment and an improved economy. The EDO team is focused on increasing the number of company expansions, providing business information and referrals to local companies and maintaining an early warning system for key business climate issues.

### Neighborhoods...

Fort Myers >> [If it was good enough for Ford and Edison...](#)

Established in 1886, the city of Fort Myers, nestled along the shore of the Caloosahatchee River, boasts the youngest population in Lee County. Fort Myers has undergone an extensive renovation to its historic, downtown waterway, with new restaurants, nightclubs, apartments, and artistic venues providing energy and growth.

Fort Myers Beach >> [Sand, surf and fun!](#) A seven-mile-long island, Fort Myers Beach is fueled by tourism from the million-plus people that visit each year. Due to tourism being so prominent, the hotel and amenities business is booming.

North Fort Myers >> [Waterfront living and golf course views.](#) Stretched along the Caloosahatchee River, just north of Cape Coral, the community's residents enjoy an area that's home to the Children's Science Center, historic Shell Factory and the Lee County Civic Center.

South Fort Myers >> [Where culture comes alive.](#) Comprised mainly of older homes, South Fort Myers is designed with families, golfers and retirees in mind. Home to Lee County's largest cultural facility, the Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Hall, and the Lee County Sports Complex, residents of the area enjoy a variety of upscale restaurants and shopping experiences.

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between Naples and Fort Myers, Bonita Springs offers a lifestyle for just about everyone.

**Lehigh Acres**>> **A casual, rural lifestyle!** Affordable housing and a younger population, the area offers a plentiful supply of land, convenient access to the Interstate and airport. Lehigh Acres is poised for explosive growth in the coming years.

**Cape Coral**>> **One of south Florida's best kept secrets.** An active community, Cape Coral offers residents golf, tennis, fishing, community parks and even Sun Splash Family Waterpark. The past few years has seen tremendous growth for the community with the development of a number of commercial and manufacturing sites.

**Sanibel/Captiva Islands**>> **a jewel on the Southwest coast.** Sanibel/Captiva is home to pristine white beaches, balmy Gulf waters, and an unsurpassed lifestyle for its residents. Art galleries, theatres, upscale resorts and restaurants dot these islands.

**COLLIER COUNTY** - The most conservative estimates of the 2010 population place Collier County's population at approximately 380,000, with the year-round resident population exceeding 450,000 around 2020.

Collier County, which includes the cities of Naples, Marco Island and Everglades City, is the largest county in the state with a total area of 2,305 square miles, and a land area of 2,025 square miles. At least 80 percent of that is set aside as preserve lands, including Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park, two national wildlife refuges, one national research reserve, three state parks, one state forest and many county, city and private parks and nature preserves.

In addition to the above, Collier County is also the home to a large group of very wealthy residents. Widely regarded as having more millionaires per capita than any other area in the U.S., the Naples MSA is a vibrant, growing market with a very strong customer base. Evidence to support such a theory exists in the fact that Collier County residents, on average, receive more of their income from unearned sources (investments, interest, etc) than any other place in the United States.

Collier County is a vibrant, expanding market for goods and services. As Baby Boomers retire and move to Collier County, the market will solidify its position as one of the leading consumer markets in the State of Florida and in the Country. Supplanted by the area's wealth, and maintained by an ever-growing working population, Collier County is poised to

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become the ideal market to introduce new goods and services and expand product offerings.

Naples>> **The city, known for its wealthy residents** doesn't hide its comforts. From flip-flops to designer gowns, residents of all income levels are living a fabulous life along this piece of paradise.

For the active resident, Naples is home to dozens of private, public and community golf courses, deeming the community the "Golf Capital of the World."

Then there's the real estate! Stylish seaside cottages, mega-million dollar mansions and everything in-between. Architecture treats the eye. Retirees and entrepreneurs discovered Naples in the 1950s, but building took off in the 1960s. All of it is fresh and well cared for.

If you consider yourself more of an artisan, there are at least 134 art galleries in the Greater Naples area to fill your free time.

From exceptional health facilities to swamp buggy festivals, the city is a plethora of entertainment and offers its residents a tropical lifestyle.

Marco Island>> **The largest of Florida's Ten Thousand Islands**, is the last populated shore on the southern tip of Florida's sunny Gulf coast.

With nearly six miles of beaches, more than 100 miles of waterways within 14 square miles, the area is best suited for those seeking a peaceful lifestyle.

Quiet, unhurried, off the beaten track, Marco opens east to the mystical Everglades, west to the magical Gulf of Mexico. The resort crowd vacations here year after year, drawn by the island's luxurious laid-back comfort. Seafaring menus echo island pastimes of sea and backwater fishing, scuba diving,

snorkeling and beach combing. Tables near tidewater afford sweeping views of gleaming yachts and rainbowed sailboats gliding past color-touched clouds.

Those looking to buy real estate within the Greater Marco Island area can expect to pay \$650,000 to upwards of \$5 million for condos and single-family homes.

Immokalee>> is largely agricultural area, 50 miles north-east of Naples, and home of the Seminole Indian Casino. Immokalee has begun to grow as the community became a Foreign Trade Zone, Federal and Florida Enterprise Zone, and Entrepreneurial Zone

## We Recommend > > LEE & COLLIER COUNTIES

**Stay!** Discerning travelers to Captiva Island deserve only the best when it comes time to reserve a vacation home.

**Our Captiva** features premier rental properties highlighted by the best in interior furnishings and the most breathtaking locales within Southwest Florida. From "Relaxed Elegance" to "Barefoot Ambiance", the properties that Our Captiva represents have been equipped, detailed and taken care of in ways unlike any other. The amenities that are individually property specific are there for guests to enjoy, relax and really get away.

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**Stay!** Off the beaten path, the European-style boutique **Wyvern Hotel**, Punta Gorda, provides guests with luxurious accommodations, amid a more peaceful and slower-paced locale.

# Visit Sanibel & Captiva Islands, and Ft. Myers Beach



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Call 888.318.8496 or Book Online:  
[www.WestWindInn.com](http://www.WestWindInn.com)

The hotel's 63 spacious guestrooms are warmly decorated with a cozy residential feel, all rooms feature large flat screen LCD televisions with full cable access and video on demand, complimentary high speed Internet access, wired and WiFi, specially programmed IPOD docking stations, mini bars and laptop safes.

With panoramic views of Charlotte Harbor, the lushly landscaped Wyvern Hotel Rooftop Lounge is the perfect place to enjoy the sunset or relax and unwind in the beautiful swimming pool.

941-639-7700 | [www.wyvernhotel.com](http://www.wyvernhotel.com)

**Stay!** Nestled along the sun-drenched beaches of the Gulf of Mexico, yet tucked far enough away from any hustle and bustle, the beach community of Naples is renown for offering visitors and locals a destination highlighted by world class boutique shopping, dining, stunning art galleries and abundant, challenging golf courses. **Phase III Real Estate Services and Vanderbilt Vacations** has been providing only the finest properties in Naples for more than 20 years, at a cost that's affordable to visitors and a service that's second-to-none.

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**Shop!** Bring home a memory as refined as your vacation. Travelers no longer need to settle for kitschy souvenirs of their vacations and can enjoy discerning treasures and gifts throughout the Shops on Sanibel Island.

**The Tahitian Gardens** shopping center features an array of designer fashions, jewelry and high end outdoor gear and whimsical collectibles.

Visitors in search of more upscale shopping can enjoy **The Village Shops**. Offering the shopaholics a variety of services and boutique-style shops to indulge themselves, the village is also home to Day spas luxurious items.

Relive your island experience at **Olde Sanibel Shoppes**, an ideal stop for those wanting gifts, art and pet needs.

If you can't tear yourself away from the beaches of Sanibel and find yourself last minute shopping, Town Center contains hidden treasures. For more information on shopping in Sanibel visit [www.shoponsanibel.com](http://www.shoponsanibel.com).

**Stay!** Family Friendly **Charter Club Resort Of Naples Bay** overlooks picturesque Naples Bay and features two bedroom/two bath furnished condos w/king bed in master, two twins in second, living room with sofa sleeper, dining area, fully equipped kitchen, and 30 foot screened lanai. (Sleeps up to 6) Heated swimming pool and Poolside Bar/Grill. Complimentary bicycles and fishing gear. Located in the city's historic district, short walk to restaurants, art galleries, and the Tin City shopping area.

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**Explore!** Since 1986, **Captiva Cruises** has been offering a variety of cruises that explore wildlife, local ecology, history and intriguing islands accessible only by boat.

For beach and shelling enthusiasts, island destinations include Cayo Costa State Park, an un-bridged island known for its pristine beaches and seashell **continued on page 21**

Come explore our world famous Island coast for the perfect and complete Florida vacation. With our shell-strewn beaches, friendly encounters with nature, quiet island nights and balmy days you will find it easy to unwind and relax and enjoy the fabulous shopping, dining, attractions and activities that our islands offer. Visit us on-line to explore a wide selection of accommodations for your tropical escape.

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For reservations, call your travel professional or 888-543-1286, or visit [www.BocaResort.com](http://www.BocaResort.com) or [www.waldorfastori-acollection.com](http://www.waldorfastori-acollection.com). 🌐



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treasures.

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877-319-7666 | [www.hiebonitasprings.com](http://www.hiebonitasprings.com)

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**Stay!** Renting or buying, finding your dream beach property can be a daunting task. At [Sunny Beach Vacation Rentals & Sales](#), Fort Myers Beach, it becomes enjoyable. Featuring a selection of spacious vacation units and private homes, both on and off the beach, travelers are assured to receive their dream getaway accommodation - at the best cost available. Visit their Website for a complete inventory of properties, for rent and for sale. 239-463-9800 | [www.sunnybeachvacation.com](http://www.sunnybeachvacation.com)

**Stay!** [Inn on Fifth](#) is a wonderful boutique hotel five blocks from the beautiful white-sand beaches of the Gulf of Mexico. Fifth Avenue is Naples most desirable address where shoppers can find fine art galleries, antique shops, clothing boutiques and Naples finest cafes and restaurants within walking distance. Up and down the street music is flavoured with Caribbean, Irish, Jazz and Italian influences. Elegant and spacious guest rooms have been detailed with sliding French doors to balconies or terraces. Hotel amenities include a full ser-

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**Play!** Located inside Naples' North Collier Regional Park, [Sun-N-Fun Lagoon](#) encourages water fun your whole family can enjoy! From Interactive water features including a family pool, tadpole pool for children six and under, Turtle Cove for kids five to 12, a lap/diving pool, as well as Sunny's River, a lazy River attraction with five waterslides, this state-of-the-art attraction will be one of your families fondest vacation memories.

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