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2011 Preview: South Florida's 10 Most Anticipated New Venues

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Here's a look at 10 highly anticipated venues scheduled to open in the coming months.

1. New World Center

Celebrating its grand opening with a series of events starting January 25, the 100,000 square-foot New World Center is the new home for the New World Symphony. Designed by Frank Gehry, the center will offer ample event space, starting with its main, 30,000-square-foot performance hall, which can seat 756, and has variable seating and staging configurations. The SunTrust Pavilion is a separate, 2,400-square-foot area that can seat 175 or accommodate 250 reception-style. The atrium on the first floor features an LED-lit glass bar with a titanium canopy that can serve 250 guests for a cocktail party, and the rooftop garden is an 8,000-square-foot area that can host 250—with ocean, city, and bay views. The building also has some 30 smaller, multipurpose rooms, each with built-in projectors, screens, audio, and HD video recording capabilities.

2. Miami Beach SoundScape

Also set to open in late January to coincide with the New World Center's debut is Miami Beach SoundScape, a \$13 million, 2.5-acre city park designed by Dutch urban and landscape architecture firm West 8. On the corner of Washington Avenue and 17th Street, the park will have a veil of palm trees and several pergolas to support colorful bougainvillea vines. It will fit 1,000 guests comfortably, and will have public restrooms, a sidewalk concession area, and lighting/audiovisual capabilities to suit both daytime and nighttime cultural events. The park will also serve as an area from which to view the New World Center's 7,000-square-foot projection wall, which will feature programming such as free concerts, video installations, and movie screenings from the New World Symphony, as well as other cultural institutions and artists.

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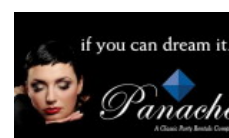
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The New World Center, Miami Beach SoundScape park, and a new, 520-space parking lot are all part of the City Center Redevelopment Project.

Rendering: Courtesy of New World Symphony

3. B Ocean Fort Lauderdale

The flagship property belonging to the new B Hotels & Resorts brand will open in late January. The 14-story, 240-room hotel, targeting business and leisure travelers ages 30 to 70, has 8,000 square feet of event space on the penthouse floor, dubbed "B On Top." Two ballrooms include the 3,500-square-foot Infinity, which can hold 250 people, and the 1,500-square-foot Horizons Junior, which can be divided into three breakout rooms and can accommodate 150. B On Top will also have a 2,400-square-foot prefunction meeting area ideal for cocktail hours or event registrations, floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the ocean, and an express elevator to take guests from the ground level to the penthouse.

4. Miami Airport Convention Center

Starting in late January, the Miami Airport Convention Center will be the city's second-largest convention and exhibition facility, with about 130,000 square feet of total event space and the ability to host more than 400 trade show booths (compared with 285 before). Formerly known as the Miami Mart Exhibition Center, the convention center is three miles south of Miami International Airport, and shares its facilities with the Doubletree Hotel, which offers an additional 20,000 square feet of event space. Part of a \$12 million renovation, the M.A.C.C. has invested in new ceilings, carpets, and escalators, and built new bathrooms. The building's bandwidth has also been quadrupled, to allow for faster, more seamless videoconferencing and live streaming. The second floor has been reconfigured to include two 8,000-square-foot ballrooms and 16 individual breakout rooms totaling 30,000 square feet. On the first floor, there are two main exhibit halls, measuring 75,000 and 30,000 square feet, respectively.

5. Miami Beach Cinematheque

The new Miami Beach Cinematheque will debut in January on Washington Avenue, on the first floor of Miami Beach's original city hall building. Formerly on Española Way, the 2,700-square-foot cinematheque is ideal for private screenings, cocktail receptions, video presentations, and press conferences. The new space consists of a screening room for 75, a gallery for photographic exhibits that can accommodate 120, and a main lobby that can hold an additional 40. An outdoor café serving Nespresso, the cinematheque's main sponsor, will be added soon, and will accommodate an additional 16 seated or 50 standing.

6. Atlantic Ocean Club

Opening its doors in January is Atlantic Ocean Club, the inaugural farm-to-table restaurant in Delray Beach from Atlantic Management Group, a new restaurant and nightlife company. The 5,000 square-foot property can seat 210, and features a nautical theme, with a 10- by 80-foot LED panel that transforms into an underwater aquarium via custom, looped video footage from the Philippe Cousteau Foundation. The menu is helmed by chef Jamie DeRosa (formerly of the Fat Duck in England) and includes items such as Dear Isle scallops from Maine and Sonoma County lamb. A second, 1,500-square-foot floor is available for private bookings, can seat 35 or hold 60 standing, and features its own bar and entrance, as well two balconies overlooking Atlantic Avenue.

7. Allure of the Seas

Having just completed its maiden voyage in December, Royal Caribbean's *Allure of the Seas* is ready for business. The 1,187-foot-long, 208-foot-wide cruise ship is the world's largest, along with its sister ship, *Oasis of the Seas*. For groups embarking on a sail, meeting spaces include studio B, which can be used for trade shows and can fit as many as 775, and the ship's conference center, which can be broken up and set up in theater, classroom, or boardroom styles, and can hold 300. Dining options include Samba Grill, a Brazilian steak house; Giovanni's Table, a family-style Italian restaurant; Rita's Cantina, a Mexican restaurant; and 150 Central Park, an upscale eatery offering seven-course meals. The ship's restaurants and its 2,000-person theater are available for buyout. *Allure of the Seas* alternates between an eastern and western Caribbean seven-night itinerary, and docks on Sundays in Fort Lauderdale.

8. Eden South Beach

The joint venture between restaurant and hospitality veteran Kelley Jones (Morimoto, Buddakan), and three other partners, Eden South Beach restaurant debuted in late 2010 and is sure to be one of 2011's top eateries. Featuring seasonal American cuisine by James Beard Award-winning chef Christopher Lee, the 3,000-square-foot eatery has three separate areas: a bar/lounge that seats 18, an indoor restaurant for 62, and a "Garden of Eden" courtyard, seating 54. The last holds an array of fresh herbs and fruits—including papaya, rosemary, key limes, mint, fennel, bananas, and cilantro—that are used in more than 20 percent of the menu. The whole restaurant is available for buyout.

9. Coral Gables Country Club

In time for the 2011 social season, the 45,000 square-foot Coral Gables Country Club completed a 12-month, \$3 million

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makeover late last year. Among the changes: The north entrance now features 13-foot doors and a black granite waterfall; the 3,000-square-foot banquet foyer was reconfigured to host large receptions (it can now hold 360 people, double its original capacity); and the foyer's carpeting was replaced with Italian marble flooring, its ceiling height was raised to 16 feet, and its pot lights were replaced with contemporary Austrian crystal chandeliers. Similarly, the carpeting in the 8,000-square-foot main ballroom, which can hold 600, was replaced with mahogany flooring.

10. [Bongos Cuban Café at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino](#)

The newest Bongos Cuban Café opened in early December from Gloria and Emilio Estefan, offering some 12,000 square feet of total event space. The main dining area is 7,000 square feet and includes an indoor Latin restaurant/lounge, a patio, and a mezzanine—which combined can seat 280. A separate 5,000-square-foot rooftop lounge has private cabanas and can hold 250. A second floor on the rooftop houses a private V.I.P. section for 40. Buyouts are available.

—Angie Romero

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