



Celebrating inclusive communities | Célébrons nos communautés inclusives

INSPIRATIONS

ARTS & TRAVEL

Featured in this online edition

Message from the Editor Page 3

Arts

In Full FX..... Page 3

The Village..... Page 4

Outta Here..... Page 5

Remembering Titanic..... Page 6

Steven Atme talent showPage 7

Filmmakers with autismPage 8

TV shows and special needs..... Page 8

One brother's testament..... Page 9

John Grant's mural project.....Page 10

Wide Awake at Galileo Page 11

Galileo's celebrity..... Page 11

Travel

Hong Kong Page 14

Singapore Page 15

Tampa BayPages 16-17

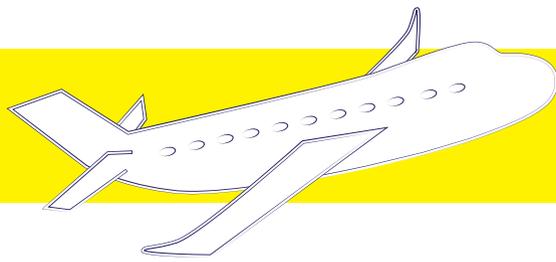


The I Can Dream Theatre dazzled in their musical dramedy Remembering Titanic, which was staged in November 2016. Featured in this photo are cast members from left to right: Mitchell Newman, Michelle Perron-Elgee, Andrew Perez, Diego Noya, Steven Atme, Maxwell Po, Gabriel Fadda, Jamal Thomas, and Ainslie Macdonald. See articles on pages 6 and 9. (Photo credit, Ross White)



www.cinemasguzzo.com

A proud supporter of Inspirations Newspaper



A look at Tampa Bay's Straz Center, Bern's Steak House and Fox Rent A Car

By Mike Cohen

Tampa: While on holiday in St. Petersburg, Florida, we regularly made the easy 30 minute drive to Tampa to do some shopping, see a show and enjoy some fine dining,

Tampa is the home of The Straz Center (<http://www.strazcenter.org>) where we purchased tickets to the hit musical *An American in Paris*. Built on an abandoned gravel lot in a city that was lacking cultural offerings, the Straz Center began as the dream of a community. Today it is the largest performing arts center in the Southeast and the only one with an on-site performing arts conservatory. The Straz Center was incorporated in 1980 and opened in 1987.

In the early 1990s, the Straz Center (then known as Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center) established arts education as a community priority, working closely with area public, private and home school programs to enhance arts education for children throughout the seven-county

Tampa Bay area. Outreach programs included curriculum connectors to Florida education standards and teacher study guides in print and online. The Straz Center's extended in-school artistic residencies, summer programs and after school offerings helped to fill the increasing gaps in arts education left by budget cuts.

The Straz Center is committed to making the performing arts available and accessible through a variety of services, including sign language interpretation, audio descriptions of shows and open captioning. It encourages patrons needing these services to call ahead (813.229.STAR). The Straz Center has an "Open Doors" Accessibility Policy. Wheelchair accessible seating may be purchased online or over the phone with a Customer Service Representative. Infrared listening system wireless headphones are available for Morsani Hall, Ferguson Hall and the Jaeb Theater. There is no charge for this service, but a driver's license, major credit card or \$10 refundable deposit is required. The Straz Center is committed to making the performing arts available and accessible through a variety of services, including American Sign Language interpretation and open captioning. Patrons needing these service are encouraged to call ahead at (813) 229-7827. Telephones, water fountains and ticket counters are placed at an appropriate height for those in wheelchairs. Companion restrooms for those needing assistance are on all levels of Morsani Hall and on the Orchestra level of Ferguson Hall. All other restrooms are equipped with special stalls. Patrons who experience mobility issues should call the Ticket Office for specific information on stairs and level changes in each theater. When ordering tickets, be sure to tell the Ticket Office of your seating needs. Transport wheelchairs are available at the Arrival Plaza. No reservation is necessary.

Headsets are available for patrons with hearing impairments to assist with amplification and clarity. They are lightweight and can be used in all sections of Carol Morsani Hall, Ferguson Hall and the Jaeb Theater. Companion restrooms are on every level of Carol Morsani Hall and on the orchestra levels of Ferguson Hall. Accessible restrooms are on the orchestra level in the Jaeb Theater and in the Shimberg Playhouse. Accessible water fountains and phones also are available in the facility on all seating levels. Just see an usher for directions. Passenger elevators are equipped with braille for access by persons with visual impairments.

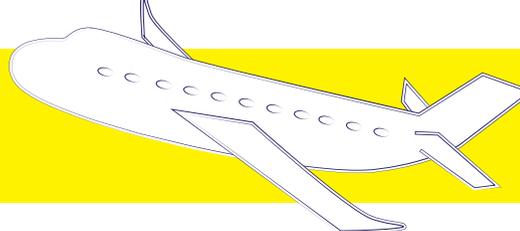
Fine Dining at Bern's Steak House

Prior to our trip I began to hear many excellent stories about Bern's Steak House (www.bernsteakhouse.com) in Tampa. This is the spot known for perfectly aged steaks, one of the largest wine collections in the world and an internationally famous dessert room. These elements have combined since 1956 to provide guests with a unique culinary experience. I must say I cannot recall a dining experience quite like this. The prime steaks are cut to order, vegetables are grown locally on the Bern's farm and sourced from the finest purveyors, and the menu includes 21 choices of caviar.

Bern's waiters train for approximately one year, working at every station in the restaurant. Our server Curt reviewed the extensive menu and made some recommendations. We started off with a delicious order of 12 oysters on the half shell for two of us and some lump crab cakes with avocado green tomato salad and Bern's blend mustard butter sauce for the third member of our party. The former was accompanied by classic cocktail sauce, horseradish sorbet, green Tobasco granita and truffled mignonette. From there, it was pretty straight forward. The three of us shared a 22 ounce cut of Chateaubriand, perfectly cooked at medium. It cut like butter. All entrées include French onion soup au gratin with garlic and spelt toasts, steak house salad,



*Some of the delicious food items from Bern's Steak House.
(Photo credit: Mike Cohen)*



baked potato, steak house crispy fried onion rings and a vegetable tasting of the evening. The menu, which you can download from their website, is most comprehensive in describing the food and how it is prepared.

After dinner, we went on the restaurant's famous kitchen and wine cellar tour. Then it was time to step inside the world famous Harry Waugh Dessert Room, built in 1985 using redwood wine casks to create 48 private rooms where guests to this day enjoy nearly 50 desserts, wines, ports, sherries, and madeiras. This represents a separate sitting. All desserts - ice creams, sherbets, pies, pastries, hot fudge, whipped cream, breads and crackers - are made by Bern's with the freshest and best ingredients available. Wow, it was difficult to choose. In the end we opted for two specialty drinks, a dreamsicle (vanilla ice cream, orange juice, orange schnapps and Hangar One mandarin) and a Butterscotch Bern's (vanilla ice cream with butterscotch liqueur and other special liqueurs) as well as the chocolate-chocolate-chocolate, classic (layers of chocolate cheese pie, chocolate cheese cake and milk chocolate mousse on a dense chocolate crust and served with whipped cream and milk chocolate shavings) and the capacino creme (their signature version of the classic American dessert Tiramisu). What a truly amazing dining experience. If you are in the area of 1208 S. Howard Street then make a reservation by calling 813-251-2421. You can valet park for \$5. Bern's is fully wheelchair accessible. There are elevators which bring you to each level of the restaurant.

Booking Your Rental Car

Booking a rental car from a good agency represents an important component to any holiday. For our recent trip we had our first experience with Fox Rent A Car (<https://www.foxrentacar.com/en/faqs.html>). Our Air Canada flight landed at the airport in Tampa. A free shuttle brought us to their area headquarters where we drove away with a Chrysler 300. I really liked this vehicle. It even came with

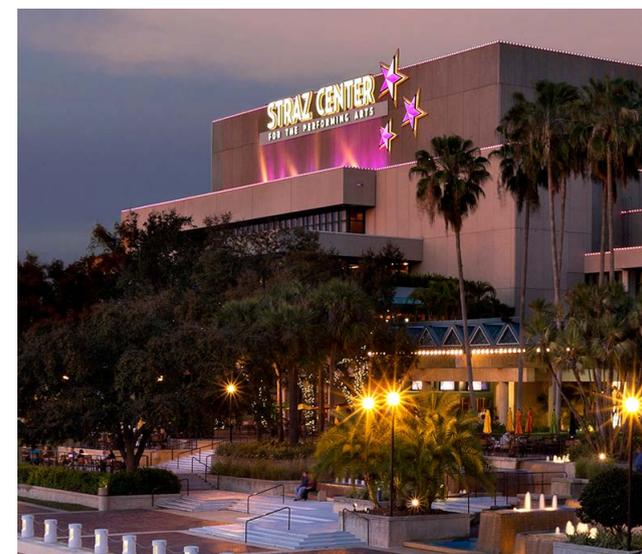
Sirius XM Satellite Radio. At Fox you'll find economy cars, family-size cars, SUVs, minivans and luxury or sport vehicles available for your discount rental. The shuttle pickup was very smooth. Our driver Robert was a real gentleman, loading and unloading all of our luggage. It is a pleasant 10 minute drive from the airport, where a friendly staff awaits and checks you in promptly. The gentleman at the desk signed me in and then walked me to the Chrysler, loading our luggage and giving me an overview of the car's features. We brought our own GPS, but Fox will provide you with one.

Fox is the fifth largest car rental company in the US and it continues expanding globally with new locations now open for reservations in the popular tourist markets of Belfast, Northern Ireland, Merida, Mexico, Auckland, New Zealand, Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada and Istanbul, Turkey.

I was very impressed with the Tampa operation, managed by Johnny Hubner. The airport is currently undergoing major renovations. When completed in early 2018, there will be a new rental car facility at which point Fox will relocate.

Fox has been in Florida for five years now, with locations in Tampa, Orlando, Fort Myers, Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Their prices are significantly better than the competition. "Pricing is obviously a big factor when renting a car," says Hubner. "That and of course the reputation of the company. I believe we stand out on both counts."

The Tampa location is open 24 hours a day. For customer service call toll free (800) 225-4369 Ext. 9 Fox does assist with reserving vehicles with hand controls. Fox cannot provide hand controls on every make or model of vehicle, and cannot confirm a reservation for a particular make or model of vehicle on any rental. For assistance with a wheelchair-accessible shuttle, you can call (800) 225-4369 or email Reservations@foxrentacar.com. The Fox facilities and shuttles are ADA accessible.



The Straz Center

Mike Cohen is the editor of Inspirations. He can be reached at mcohen@inspirationsnews.com. Follow him on Twitter @mikecohencsl.



Johnny Hubner manages the Fox Rent A Car location in Tampa.