

# TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By **MIKE COHEN**

TAMPA - Last year my family I spent our winter vacation in St. Petersburg, Florida. However, when it came to shopping and dining, we found ourselves commuting to Tampa on a fairly regular basis. We liked what we saw and were sure to make it our base this time around.

The Tampa area has

an active, year-round Jewish community of more than 45,000. The Tampa Bay Jewish community is served by 37 synagogues and other religious institutions; two Jewish federations; two Jewish community centers; two family service agencies; one Jewish day school; and seven pre-

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schools. The source for news are the *Jewish Press* of Tampa and the *Jewish Press* of Pinellas County ([www.jewishpresstampabay.com](http://www.jewishpresstampabay.com)). These are independently-owned biweekly Jewish community newspapers published in cooperation with and supported by the Tampa JCC & Federation and the Jewish Federation of Pinellas & Pasco Counties, respectively.

**DINING OUT:** In April 2017 Tampa got its first glatt Kosher restaurant called The Kosher Grill. Unfortunately, it only managed to stay in business for a few months. It just failed

to catch on with the Jewish community. There are a number of Jewish style delis and pita restaurants from which to choose. You can also check out Delicious Creations Kosher Catering.

Tampa itself has some fabulous dining establishments, starting with Florida's oldest restaurant and the largest Spanish dining establishment in the world. The Columbia Restaurant ([www.columbia-restaurant.com](http://www.columbia-restaurant.com)) was founded in 1905 by Cuban immigrant Casimiro Hernandez, Sr. The original Ybor City location is

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nothing short of magnificent. Additional Columbia locations include St. Armands Circle in Sarasota, the Historic District in St. Augustine, Sand Key on Clearwater Beach, Central Florida's town of Celebration, Columbia Café on the Riverwalk in Tampa and Columbia Restaurant Café at Tampa International Airport. All Columbia locations are owned and operated by fourth and fifth generation members of the founding family except for the airport, which is operated in partnership with HMSHost.

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse ([www.ruthschris.com](http://www.ruthschris.com)) locations can be found across the United States and elsewhere around the world. While in Tampa, we dined at the 350-seat 1700 North Westshore Blvd. location in what would mark my long awaited first review of this very famous restaurant chain. Ruth's Chris Steak House has brought its signature sizzle to more than 150 company and franchised owned locations in

the U.S and internationally. At Ruth's Chris, your last bite is just as good as your first. Their perfected broiling method and seasoning techniques ensure each cut of USDA Prime beef they serve arrives cooked to perfection and sizzling on a 500 degree plate. The menu includes seafood, appetizers, sides and desserts.

When on holiday we always try to find the best seafood restaurant in town. In Tampa, that would be Oystercatchers ([www.oystercatchersrestaurant.com](http://www.oystercatchersrestaurant.com)) at the Grand Hyatt at 2900 Bayport Drive. With its innovative cocktails and contemporary furniture, the lounge, outside patio and lower bay-level deck provide a comfortable yet chic hotspot for locals and visitors alike. The visually stimulating water views and sunsets provide a unique environment to enjoy feature wines and appetizers. As for the menu, it highlights an array of the freshest, wild and line caught fish available, organic produce and seafood special-

ties with a unique and contemporary flair. For our party of three we chose to share a number of dishes and that started with the appetizers: eight splendid oysters, an order of golden

calamari fries, an arugula salad and yellowfin tuna (red in color, served medium rare from Florida's East coast). This was a great combination! When it came *(Please turn to following page)*

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**TRAVEL TALES**

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to the main course, we opted to share a two pound lobster. It came to the table completely cut up and easy to dip into the garlic butter. We also added an order of large juicy sea scallops from the Mexican Gulf, perfectly prepared and among the best I have tasted in many years.

We had dined at the famous Jewish-owned Bern's Steak House ([www.bernsteakhouse.com](http://www.bernsteakhouse.com)) in Tampa a year earlier. This time we decided to go to Bern's after our own dinner one night and back inside the world famous Harry Waugh Dessert Room. 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. Make sure you have a reservation or prepare to wait a long time for a table. 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.

**FOX RENT A CAR:**  
 On our trip last year to St. Petersburg, Florida we had our first experience with Fox Rent A Car ([www.foxrentacar.com](http://www.foxrentacar.com)). We were extremely pleased with the service so it was therefore a no brainer to book with them again. Fox has

now moved into the new rental facility at the Tampa International Airport. We drove away with a beautiful Chrysler 300, an experience we liked so much we ordered a repeat. At Fox you'll find economy cars, family-size cars, SUVs, mini-vans and luxury or sport vehicles available for your discount rental. Prices here are significantly better than the competition.

**ATTRACTIONS:** Before you even leave on your trip log on to [www.visittampabay.com](http://www.visittampabay.com) for a comprehensive look at the area's various attractions. Consid-

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Museum of Science & Industry (MOSI) or the Chihuly Collection.

*Mike Cohen's email address is info@mikecohen.ca. Follow his travels at www.sandboxworld.com/travel or on Twitter @mikecohencsl*

**WORLD IN REVIEW**

*(Continued from page 3)*

SEAL with numerous military awards, was elected Missouri's first ever Jewish governor. Devoted to Jewish causes through his affiliation with Temple B'nei El Greitens has met with Holocaust survivors and went to Bosnia during the height of the country's ethnic cleansing. Indeed the former Rhodes Scholar was named one of *Fortune's* world's 50 greater leaders.

And Greitens also seemed to be the perfect "family man". With his Protestant wife Sheena they have two adorable boys. They appeared destined to become a power couple in American politics.

But suddenly Greitens' world has come crashing down. While still married Greitens admitted that he began an affair with his St. Louis hairdresser. And apparently on

one of their encounters Greitens took photos of his lady friend "in a state of full or partial nudity", without her consent. Greitens is accused of threatening to release the compromising photos if she did not remain silent. "You're never going to mention my name" her reportedly told her.

A St. Louis grand jury has now indicted him for felony invasion of privacy.

Some Lawmakers from both sides of the House have told Greitens that he should resign. They also want a legal opinion on whether a governor can continue to perform his duties while a felony case moves forward.

With Greitens remaining defiant, and we might add with the support of his wife, for some law- *(Please turn to following page)*

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