

# Arts, Culture & Entertainment

The Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau And The Herald-Tribune Media Group Present  
**CELEBRATE SARASOTA**

Cat d'Zan, Courtesy of SCVB • Sheffield Chastain, Brad DePlanche, Eric Hissom, and Dan Matias in *Around the World in 80 Days* at Florida Studio Theatre; photo by Maria Lyle • Asolo Repertory Theatre, Lindsay Marie Tierce in *Los Meninas*; Photo by Frank Aura  
Octavio Martin And Amy Wood, Sarasota Ballet; Photo by Frank Aura • Fernando Trava, Principal Bassoon, Sarasota Orchestra



Sarasota County is known as  
“Florida’s Cultural Coast®” and  
is ranked one of the “Top 5 Best  
Art Towns in America.”\*

\* The 100 Best Art Towns In America, by John Villani.  
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**Celebrate  
Sarasota**

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# Welcome

It has been described as the capital of Florida's Cultural Coast™, the Circus Capital of the World, a community where art and nature meet. Welcome to Sarasota County, the coastal jewel perched on the Gulf of Mexico, about 50 miles south of Tampa.

BY NANCY OAKLEY

O

ne of the key attractions of Sarasota County has been, well, its keys — six barrier islands that lie between the Sarasota Bay and the Gulf. With 35 miles of wide, white beaches, it's little wonder they attract visitors from around the world. Perhaps the most popular among them is Siesta Key, whose powdery beaches of ground quartz were ranked No. 1 in the United States by coastal scientist Stephen Leatherman, a.k.a. "Dr. Beach." Siesta is arguably *the* place to watch the sun set into an impressionist palette of gold, orange, and pink. Not to be forgotten, Longboat Key offers a cosmopolitan atmosphere, where beachfront communities, resorts, and top-notch dining abound, while Casey Key is a quiet enclave of multimillion-

dollar homes. Nature lovers appreciate the trails and pine forest on Lido Key and the remoteness of Manasota Key, and divers delight in the abundance of shark's tooth fossils off the stretch of Venice Beach.

Venice is one of many areas in Sarasota County that has some of the world's best saltwater fishing. Of course, the inland areas offer large populations of trout and other freshwater fish. The Myakka River provides a front seat to observing wildlife, such as alligators and ospreys, from an airboat. The Oscar Scherer State Park is a favorite of hikers and campers, and Mote Marine Laboratory's aquarium tours give up-close glimpses of dolphins, manatees, and more.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SARASOTA CVB, PLAYERS THEATRE PHOTO BY TED MASE



# to Sarasota

Sunset over Siesta Key Beach, named #1 beach in the nation; below, from left: Players Theatre performers KJ Hatfield and Chris Caswell, biking at Siesta Beach, and Fuzion Dance Artists.





## Celebrate Sarasota

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Clockwise from top left: kayaking in Sarasota Bay, Sarasota Bay Front sign, and Ca' d'Zan, John and Mable Ringling's Venetian-inspired villa



John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, whose namesakes first transformed the sleepy town into a mecca for the arts, adds to that creative spirit.

John Ringling of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, and his wife Mable built a permanent home in Sarasota in 1926 — Ca' d'Zan, a Venetian-inspired villa. A year later, Ringling moved the winter headquarters of his circus to Sarasota, bringing an influx of artists and performers. After his death in 1936, Ringling willed his mansion and staggering collection of baroque paintings and other artworks to the state of Florida. Today, residents and visitors are the beneficiaries of his generosity, whether admiring the interiors of Ca' d'Zan, the scores of Rubens and Van Dycks in the art museum, or the memorabilia at the Tibbals Learning Center and Circus Museum. But the legacy of the big top doesn't stop there: In 1997 husband and wife Pedro Reis and Dolly Jacobs, both veteran performers, created Circus Sarasota, a nonprofit that offers dazzling performances in a one-ring European-style circus as well as numerous education and outreach initiatives.

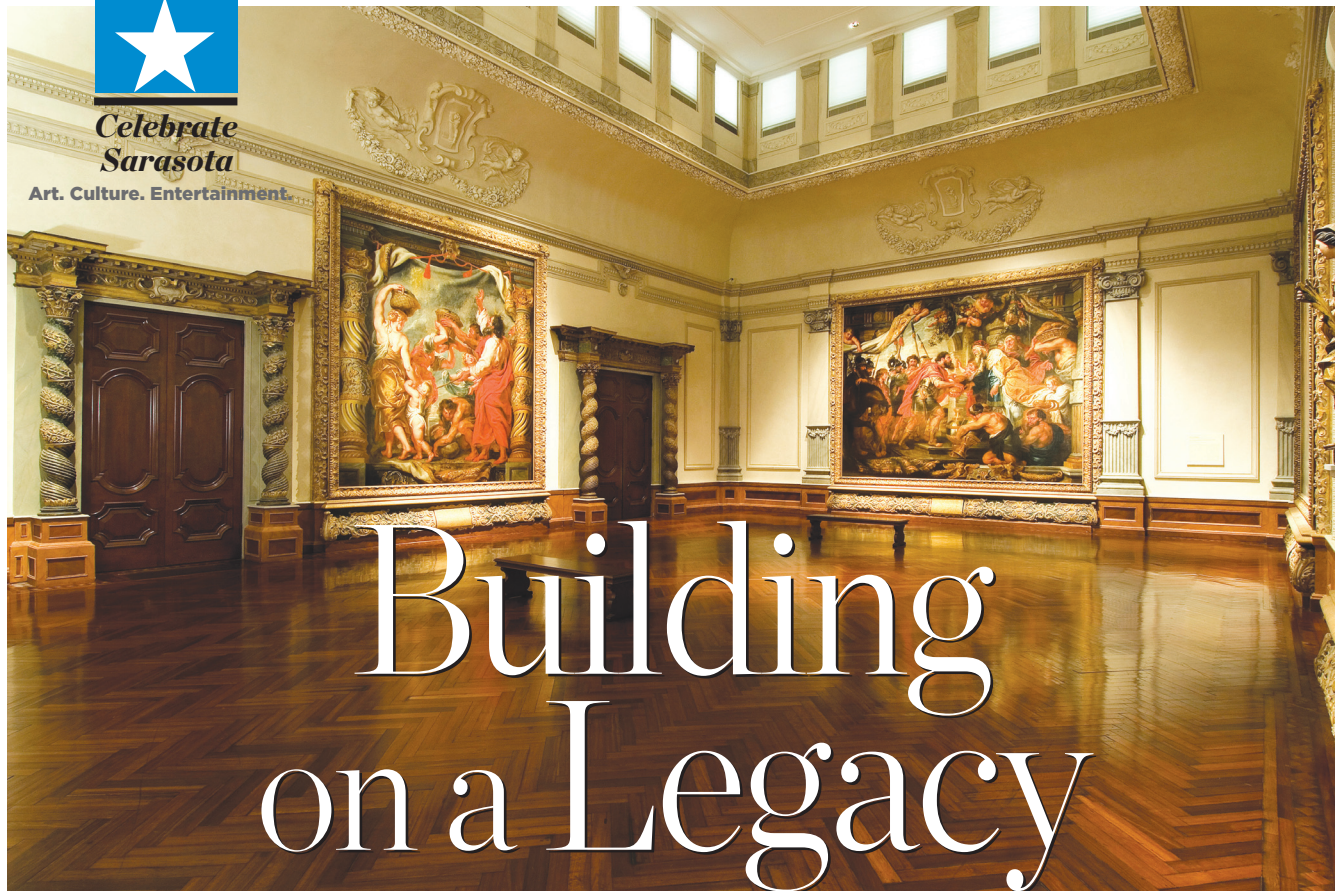
Outreach lies at the heart of the city's arts community. Sarasota Orchestra and Sarasota Opera include a Youth Orchestra and a Youth Opera respectively, while the Asolo, Venice, and Players theaters also have educational programs to inspire budding playwrights and actors. And the Sarasota Ballet has Dance — The Next Generation, an arts-oriented at-risk youth retention program now in its 16th year. So pervasive is the arts community's commitment to education that the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts recently chose Sarasota as its partner for Any Given Child, a program that establishes long-range arts curriculum for public schools. No doubt, the community will remain the capital of Florida's Cultural Coast™ for years to come.

As if its natural beauty weren't enough, Sarasota County claims a cultural life parallel to any major community. Rich in history, the area has 90-some sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including its vibrant downtowns, bustling with shops and restaurants — all within a stone's throw of the waterfront. As for the arts, the city of Sarasota is home to Florida's oldest continuing orchestra (Sarasota Orchestra), the oldest theater company (Asolo Repertory Theatre), and the Gulf Coast of Florida's first professional ballet company (Sarasota Ballet) and opera company (Sarasota Opera). Plus, Sarasota boasts dozens of theater companies, including the revered Florida Studio Theatre, as well as festivals for film and chamber music. The North Port area boasts an impressive Ukrainian population and Performing Arts Center. Then there's Art Center Sarasota, where visitors can take classes or attend exhibitions, and numerous galleries, which thrive thanks to the creative spirit from the Ringling College of Art & Design. And the



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# Building on a Legacy

The John and Mable Ringling  
Museum of Art gives an inside look  
at circus history, life, and more.

Nearly 100 years ago, John Ringling, the legendary circus king, pledged, “I am going to make Sarasota one of the sights of the South ... [it] will become one of the most beautiful cities in Florida.”

finest properties — a picturesque 66-acre estate on Sarasota Bay and a captivating showplace of arts, culture, and nature.

Featuring a Venetian-inspired palatial mansion, art museum, circus museum, and a jewel-box-of-a-theater brought over from Italy and restored to its 18th-century luster, the Ringling Museum also is home to stunning grounds, a waterfront promenade, and an expansive rose garden.

Completed in 1925 at a cost of \$1.5 million, *Ca’ d’Zan* is the Ringling’s 56-room Venetian palace. Filled with art and original furnishings, it is a tribute to the American dream. Described as “the last of the Gilded Age mansions” to be built in America, the palace reflects the splendor and romance of Italy with its Venetian Gothic architecture. *Ca’ d’Zan* is a combination of the grandeur of Venice’s Doge’s Palace, combined with the gothic grace of Ca’ d’Oro, with Sarasota Bay



When you visit Sarasota, you’ll see it wasn’t just the talk of a showman. Make the grandiose Ringling Estate that John created with his wife Mable your first stop and you’ll see that he fulfilled his promise.

Governed by The Florida State University, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art is The State Art Museum of Florida and arguably one of America’s



serving as its Grand Canal.

The Museum of Art opened in 1931, emulating the footprint of Florence, Italy's Uffizi Gallery and echoing its elegance and magnificence. John's personal collection of masterpieces fills the 21 original galleries, including paintings and sculptures by Rubens, van Dyck, Velázquez, Veronese, El Greco, and Gainsborough, among many others. The Courtyard of the Museum of Art features one of the most iconic images of Sarasota: a 16-foot bronze-cast replica of the statue of *David* by Michelangelo. Bathed in Florida sunlight and surrounded by palm trees, *David* towers high above the Museum of Art Courtyard. Expanded in 2002, the Museum of Art now showcases the Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing Wing, built for popular traveling exhibitions, as well as highlights of Cypriot, Asian, modern, and contemporary art from the Museum's collection. The latest addition to the Searing Wing will be unveiled on the Winter Solstice — December 22, 2011. At more than 3,000 square feet, the Skyspace, created by James Turrell, is one of the largest and most technologically advanced of the artist's works. It is the foundation for the Museum's newest initiative, *Art of Our Time*, which introduces audiences to the established and emerging talent within the international arts community who are defining current trends in contemporary art.

Serving as the Ringling Museum's performance gallery, the Historic Asolo Theater presents museum-quality performances that explore and exemplify the rich



diversity of ideas and forms at play in the world today. Built in 1798 as the first public theater in the Castle of Caterina Cornaro in the Italian town of Asolo near Venice, the U-shaped theater was purchased in 1950 by Arthur Everett "Chick" Austin, Jr., the first Director of the Museum, and reinstalled in the Visitor Pavilion in 2006. One of three performance arts theaters at the Ringling Center for the Arts, the Historic Asolo Theater is the heart of performances for Ringling International Arts Festival. A partnership with the Baryshnikov Arts Center of New York, the festival showcases established and emerging international artists from the world of dance, music, and theater and marks the beginning of the arts and cultural season in Sarasota each October.

Clockwise from top left: Museum of Art Rubens Gallery, Ca' d'Zan, Museum of Art Courtyard, Historic Asolo Theater, Mable's Rose Garden





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The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art is open 362 days a year. For more information, visit [ringling.org](http://ringling.org).



The Ringling Museum shares the legacy of the circus king, John Ringling, and the importance of circus history through year-round special and permanent exhibitions. The Circus Museum is home to the recently restored Wisconsin, John and Mable Ringling's private railroad car, as well as beautifully carved parade wagons, rare handbills and art prints, circus papers, business records, wardrobe, performing props, and circus equipment.

**Above:**  
*Howard Bros.  
Circus Model*  
**Below:**  
Tibbals Learning  
Center  
interactive  
galleries

A highlight of the Circus Museum for visitors big and small is the *Howard Bros. Circus Model*, an authentic replica of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Complete with eight main tents, 152 wagons, 1,300 circus performers and workers, more than 800 animals, and a 57-car train, the model is a 1/4-inch-to-the-foot scale replica and occupies 3,800 square feet in the Circus Museum's Tibbals Learning Center. This captivating model is the "largest miniature circus in the world" and was created by master model builder and philanthropist Howard Tibbals of Tennessee.

The growth of the Museum continues with a recent opening of the Tibbals Center's 11,000-square-foot expansion of interactive exhibition space. Inviting children of all ages to experience the atmosphere, drama, and magic of a day at the circus, the playful new space offers the opportunity to walk a high wire, fit into a model of a 2-foot-by-3-foot car made famous by clown Lou Jacobs, and super-impose your face onto replicas of circus posters.





Left:  
The Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth: Sectional View of the Great Double Menagerie, 1895, Cincinnati Art Museum.  
Below:  
The Strobbridge Lithographing Company, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows: *Leaping Tiger*, 1915, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

Colorful, exotic animals, amazing performers, delightful clowns, and more are showcased in 80 brilliantly, boldly, bombastic lithographs in the special exhibition *The Amazing American Circus Poster: The Strobbridge Lithographing Company*. Celebrating our fascinating circus heritage and showcasing how late nineteenth and early twentieth century circus posters changed the face of American advertising forever, *The Amazing American Circus Poster* draws from the collections of the Ringling Museum, Howard Tibbals, and the Cincinnati Art Museum. Made in America and produced in Cincinnati by the Strobbridge Lithographing Company, one of the country's leading printers for the circuses, these historic posters were distributed throughout the country from 1878 to 1939 and are unrivaled in their artistry. The fascinating illustrations and compelling color palettes provide us with a detailed portrait of the American circus in its Golden Age, when it was the premier entertainment institution in the country. With an array of dates and show titles, the posters in the exhibition span from the time of P.T. Barnum's greatest show on earth to the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. All of the circus posters are displayed



in the Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing Wing of the Ringling Museum of Art through January 29, 2012.

*The Amazing American Circus Poster* exhibition was organized by the Cincinnati Art Museum and The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art and has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: "Because democracy demands wisdom."

## Visit the Exhibit

*The Amazing American Circus Poster* special exhibition at Ringling Museum of Art through January 29, 2012. For more information visit [ringling.org](http://ringling.org).



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ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE

FSU/ASOLO CONSERVATORY

SARASOTA BALLET

# Stories on Stage

Asolo Repertory Theatre's stellar performances have put it on the national radar.

**T**ell great stories. It's what we do." Such is the mission statement of Asolo Repertory Theatre's producing artistic director, Michael Donald Edwards.



The company was, to use his expression, "the lodestone and trigger" for Sarasota's arts community when, 50-odd years ago, the faculty of Florida State University established a summer acting troupe in the Ringling Museum's Asolo Theater (an 18th-century stage shipped from Asolo, Italy). Today, the company's facilities occupy an arts center with two theaters — the better to accommodate the rotation of the near-dozen plays from October through July — as well as the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training season (the original historic

theater is still used for one or two productions). "We're the leading regional theater in Florida, the oldest, biggest theater in the state," says Edwards. "And," he adds, "a significant part of the national American theater scene."

Though the Australian-born director has been with Asolo Rep for just six seasons ("It feels more like six months," he jokes), he feels a strong commitment to maintaining the high standard that FSU initially set, while bringing a fresh perspective to each season's lineup. "There had been no tradition of doing musicals until I came to the theater here," explains Edwards, whose career has been a mix of Shakespeare, contemporary plays, musicals, and opera, including a stint at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Under his aegis, Asolo Rep was the first company to produce Broadway's *A Tale of Two Cities*, and after premiering at La Jolla Playhouse in California, *Bonnie & Clyde* took its next

BY NANCY OAKLEY



Clockwise from top left: The FSU Center for the Performing Arts — Home of Asolo Repertory Theatre, inside the Mertz Theatre, Laura Osnes and Jeremy Jordan in Asolo Rep's production of *Bonnie & Clyde*, *Twelve Angry Men*, Michael Donald Edwards

essential creative step at Asolo Repertory Theatre before heading to Broadway.

And these are only two of the “great stories,” that Asolo Rep strives to tell. This season will kick off with the classic *My Fair Lady*, a revised version of *Yentl* with new music, as well as a new review, *Pulse*, choreographed and starring Noah Racey, inspired by Tommy Tune. There are other surprises, such as the newly rediscovered Noël Coward comedy *Fallen Angels*, representing one of the first productions in the U.S. and *Red*, the Tony Award-winning drama about abstract expressionist Mark Rothko, produced in partnership with the John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art and presented in the Historic Asolo Theater as a co-production with Maltz Jupiter Theatre. Perhaps most surprising is *Hamlet, Prince of Cuba*, Edwards’s own adaptation of Shakespeare’s classic drama, which will see three performances staged in Spanish. Not only is it a sort of love letter from the artistic director to his adopted home of Florida, it is a way of keeping the tried-and-true works fresh.

All of the productions speak to Asolo Rep’s ability to take risks and try new things — a luxury afforded by the openness of the city’s audiences. “In Sarasota,” observes Edwards, “people come here for a week, then they’ll come for two weeks, then a month, and then they move here. You have the ability to



enjoy the arts as if you were living in Manhattan.”

In fact, many of the theater’s audiences are New Yorkers who are familiar not only with Broadway, but with seasons in London and Stratford, Canada. “They expect us to do things on that level,” Edwards says. “I feel there’s a conversation between me and our audience, between our theater and the community.”

It’s all a part of a national conversation, he observes, to introduce new ideas to audiences. “We have a big job,” he asserts. And so far, a job well done.

### Catch a Performance

Asolo Repertory Theatre  
5555 North Tamiami Trail  
For tickets call the box office at  
800.361.8388 or 941.351.8000,  
or log on to [asolorep.org](http://asolorep.org).

**ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE**



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# Art is Made in Sarasota

For more than 50 years, the town has been a creative tour de force. And that hasn't changed.

After World War II, aspiring artists and teachers came to Sarasota to attend the Ringling School of Art and Design, and many stayed in the area and achieved worldwide acclaim. From the 1950s to '80s, Sarasota was an avant-garde artist colony with internationally recognized artists including Hilton Leech, Jimmy Ernst, David Budd, Conrad Marca-Relli, Everett Shinn, Syd Solomon, and Helen Sawyer. The visual arts scene in this Florida Gulf Coast city is as dynamic as ever — and the artwork created here continues to draw worldwide attention.



**ELIZABETH  
VAN RIPER**  
*Lauren's Cache  
Pot, 30" x 30"*  
mixed media  
on canvas

Fourth-generation Sarasota artist Elizabeth Van Riper is continuously inspired by nature's exuberance. Her work appears in both corporate and

private collections and has been licensed and offered by prestigious national retailers in the U.S. and abroad. Van Riper has recently launched a retail/wholesale Web site ([elizabethvanriper.com](http://elizabethvanriper.com)) offering her fine art images as fashion and home accessories for artful living.



**RUBADOUX PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PRIVATE  
COLLECTION OF ELISABETH AND GIL WATERS**

**BRONZART FOUNDRY**  
*The Ancient Incident (Kabab American  
Zephyr), 1982-2006, 7'2.5" x 7'7" x 1'9"*

For more than 30 years, the staff of Bronzart, a full-service, lost wax foundry, has worked closely with artists and their clients in the creation of high-quality, large and small bronze sculpture. The foundry's work is found in private collections and major public installations. For more information and images, visit [bronzartfoundry.com](http://bronzartfoundry.com).



**Robert Rauschenberg**

**CRAIG RUBADOUX**  
*Greenhill Tango, 30" x 29"*  
mixed media on canvas

Craig Rubadoux settled in Sarasota in 1945 and studied with Ben Stahl and at the Ringling School of Art and Design. His art is included in many public and private collections including New York's Guggenheim Museum; Atlanta's High Museum of Art; Sarasota's Ringling Museum of Art; Fort Lauderdale's Museum of Art; and St. Petersburg's Museum of Fine Arts. Rubadoux works primarily on paper and canvas.



**VICKY RANDALL**  
*Clockwork:*  
*Six Weeks in July,*  
4' x 2' x 1'  
fabricated  
stainless steel

Vicky Randall has been creating artwork in fabricated metals for more than 25 years. She is best

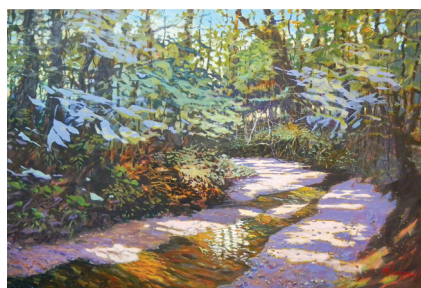
known for her monumental public art installations, a wide range of which can be found in corporate and private collections in the U.S. and abroad. Learn more at [vickyrandall.com](http://vickyrandall.com).



**KATHLEEN MCDONALD**  
*Lido Beach,*  
Sarasota, FL  
acrylic, 24 x 24

Kathleen McDonald is a landscape and seascape painter, a potter,

printmaker, and photographer. She is best known for her fearless use of pure color, much of it informed by her travels to exotic locals and Sarasota County beaches and waterways. More work can be seen online at [KathleenMcDonald.artspan.com](http://KathleenMcDonald.artspan.com).



**JOSEPH MELANCON**  
*Sunbath,* 48" x 72", acrylic on canvas

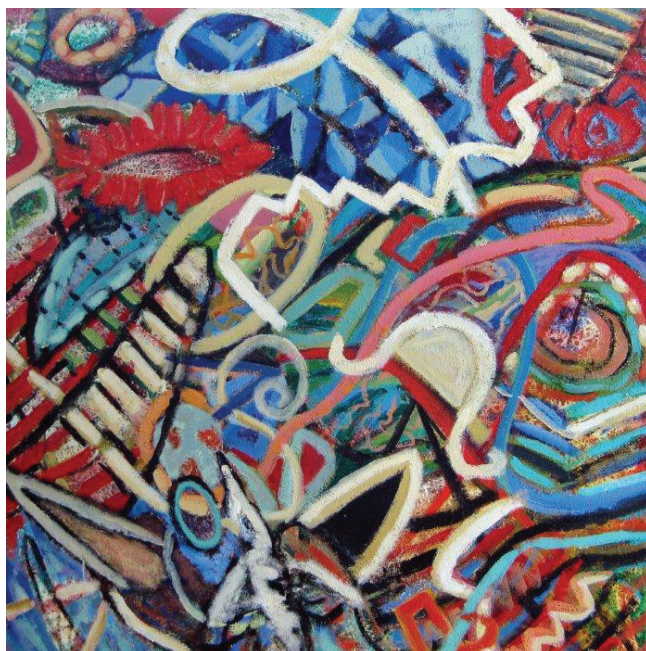
Joseph Melancon is a nationally recognized award-winning artist whose workshops are highly sought after. His work is in academic, corporate, and private collections throughout the country. For more visuals, visit [josephmelancon.com](http://josephmelancon.com).



**JORGE BLANCO**  
*Polo,* 2009, 169" x 96" x 82", aluminum and paint, from Caracas, Venezuela

A native of Venezuela, Jorge Blanco has lived and worked in Sarasota since 1999. With more than 35 years of exhibited work, his art can be found in private collections, galleries, and museums in Europe, the

Caribbean, South America, and the U.S. His public art creations appear throughout the world, and over the last decade he has been awarded 13 public-art commissions in the U.S. To see more of his work, go to [jorgeblancosculpture.com](http://jorgeblancosculpture.com).



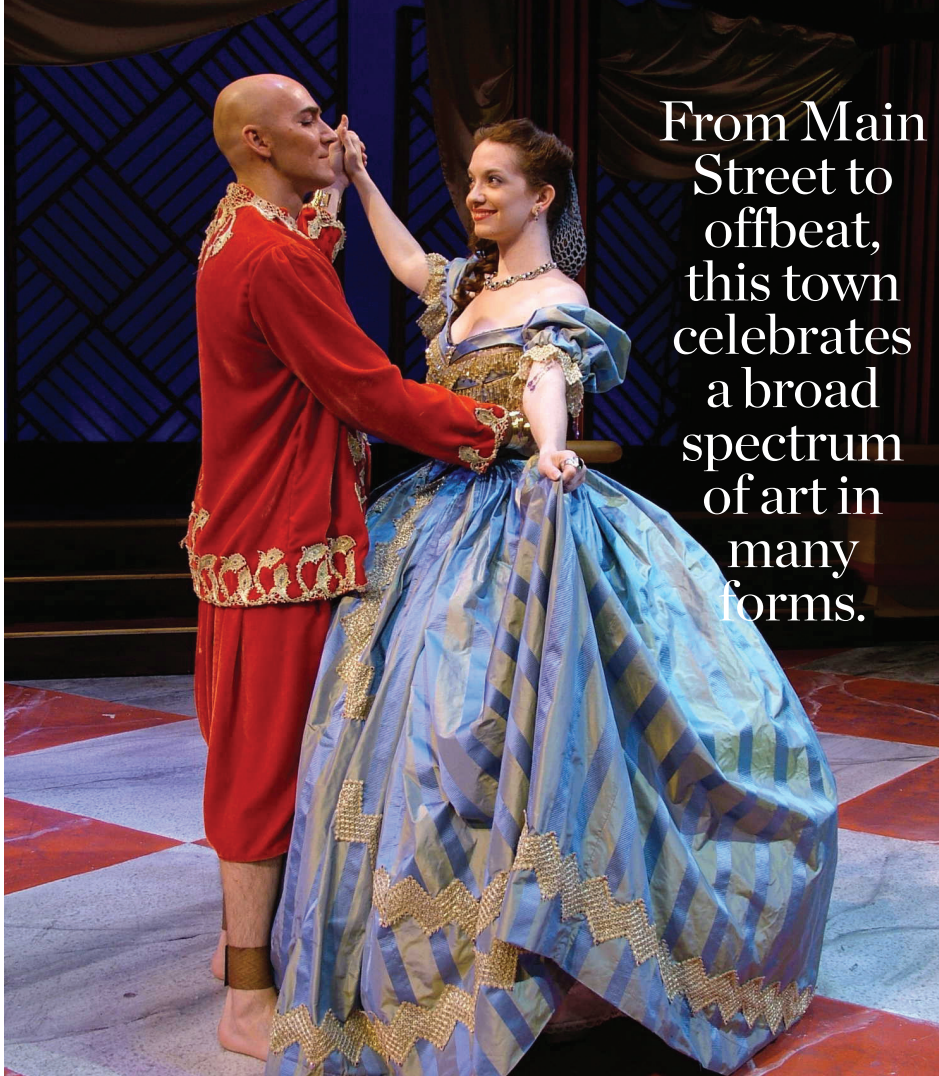
**FLORENCE PUTTERMAN**  
*Crossroads,* 65" x 58", acrylic on canvas

A National Endowment Grant awardee and recipient of numerous other national awards, Putterman's work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in the U.S. and Europe. Her paintings are in private, corporate, and museum collections throughout the U.S., including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Chicago Art Institute. For more on her art, visit [florenceputterman.com](http://florenceputterman.com).



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From Main Street to offbeat, this town celebrates a broad spectrum of art in many forms.

BY NANCY OAKLEY

# Venice: The Art of Living

**D**rive just 30 miles south of Sarasota to the Gulf of Mexico, and you might think you've arrived at the Adriatic Sea. For there lies the City of Venice.

Like its Italian counterpart, this island-city is one of bridges and canals. A small, historic beach town with big city amenities, Venice was designed by famous city planner John Nolen in 1926. Its Northern Italian Renais-

sance architectural style, dotted with beautiful fountains, is a feast for the eyes as you walk among giant oaks and banyan trees between the beach and the inviting downtown. Stop at any of the 100-plus independent shops on Venice Avenue for the latest beach fashions and antiques, or sate your appetite at any of the sidewalk cafes and waterfront restaurants offering a global smorgasbord, from French and Italian fare to Japanese and New American cuisine. And don't forget the many outdoor events such as the festival celebrating the city's moniker, "Shark's Tooth

Capital of the World,” or the Downtown Venice Art Classic, held every spring.

Artists say they are drawn to Venice for the light. Whether you paint, photograph, or merely appreciate the works of others, you too will see the light at the Venice Art Center, which offers a variety of classes in practically every medium. Go ahead, get in touch with your inner Picasso with a course in abstract art or drawing, or take in one of the numerous exhibitions showcasing local talent.

Venice’s cultural life features art in its many forms. Under the guiding hand of Conductor and Musical Director Kenneth Bowermeister, the Venice Symphony, composed of musicians from across the U.S., Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, and a host of other countries, presents six sets of concerts a year. Start off the 2011–12 season with a holiday concert, or hear Young-Ah Tak play Beethoven’s *Piano Concerto No. 5* in February. Spring brings outdoor pops concerts and a local food drive. It’s one of several examples of community outreach (which also include concerts at area schools), an essential component of the Venice Symphony’s mission.

There is art, there is music — and there is theater. For the last decade, Venice Theatre has been distinguished as the third-largest and most-awarded community theater in the U.S. Two stages in a beautifully renovated historic building host a dazzling array of programming. The theater’s 62nd season includes Broadway-style musicals and



comedies, intimate cabarets, contemporary cutting-edge productions, and classic family fare. Add nationally renowned concert and stand-up comedy acts, and it’s easy to see why Venice Theatre is the destination for live entertainment. Mark your calendars for June 18–26, 2014, when Venice Theatre will once again host the International Community Theatre Festival in Paradise, a gathering of troupes that stage all genres of theater — comedy, drama, opera, and circus acts — in the native languages of each country represented.

This global gathering is an apt metaphor for Venice. The beauty of its beaches, its Italian-inspired downtown, and myriad cultural offerings are nothing short of Edenic, but it’s the city’s sense of community that truly gives meaning to the word “paradise.”

Clockwise from far left: *The King and I* at the Venice Theatre, the Downtown Venice Art Classic, and the Venice Symphony

For more information, visit [venicegov.com](http://venicegov.com), [venicemainstreet.com](http://venicemainstreet.com), [veniceartcenter.com](http://veniceartcenter.com), [venicestage.com](http://venicestage.com), and [thevenicesymphony.org](http://thevenicesymphony.org).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CITY OF VENICE





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# Stage Left, Right, and Center

BY NANCY OAKLEY

Florida Studio  
Theatre puts on  
more than a  
performance.

**T**he words “studio theater” conjure images of small stages, one-act plays, and solo performances. But six programs? National and regional premieres? A playwriting program?



A festival? And some 200,000 attendees per year? Florida Studio Theatre is a testament to the power of dreaming big.

Established in 1973 by Jon Spelman, FST started out as a small alternative troupe that toured prisons, migrant camps, community centers, and nursing homes. By 1977, its supporters found the company a permanent

home in Sarasota’s Historic Women’s Club Building. From there, FST expanded year after year but never lost touch with its roots.

Billing itself as a company where “the street meets the elite,” FST offers the best in contemporary theater at an affordable price and encourages everyone in the community to be a part of it. The company now boasts three theaters that host performances year-round, thanks to its six theatrical programs.

Of these programs, the Mainstage season plays are at the helm. Winter and summers are filled with dynamic plays and musicals of Broadway and off-Broadway fare. The program has seen 89 national premieres and 33 regional premieres across its historic Keating and Gompertz stages. From the



Pulitzer Prize-winning musical *Next to Normal* to the heart-wrenching world premiere of *Jericho*, FST produces work that speaks to a living, breathing, and constantly changing community.

Once their appetites were whetted with the latest and greatest of cutting-edge theater, Sarasota audiences hungered for more. In 1987, FST began offering lively music revues. Today, in the Parisian-style Goldstein Cabaret, audiences enjoy cabaret and improv, which celebrates the lyric poets of our time and presents social and political satire. And that's not all. In an effort to draw new audiences, FST introduced daring and edgy fare that stimulated audiences by mixing thought-provoking plays, such as Edward Albee's *The Goat*, with popular works such as last season's *Shear Madness*.

But staging performances isn't the extent of FST's reach. The company makes a concerted effort to keep theater alive by developing new plays, specifically during the annual Sarasota Festival of New Plays. Here, audiences can see a play in process, thanks to the Richard and Betty Burdick Play Reading



Series, while playwrights can try out rehearsals of their latest works. Even children get into the act with *Under Six*, featuring a collage of works by students in kindergarten through the sixth grade. It's the culmination of FST's Write a Play program, in which some 55,000 students across Florida, from kindergarten through 12th grade, learn the art of crafting a play.

So the next time you hear the phrase "studio theater," ask yourself, as did one famous playwright, "What's in a name?" In the case of Florida Studio Theatre, the answer is "plenty."

Clockwise from top left: The productions of *The 39 Steps*, *Ruined*, *Night Train to Memphis*, and *Black Pearl Sings!*

**FST** florida  
studio  
theatre

For tickets, visit the box office located at the corner of North Palm and Coconut avenues, call 941.366.9000, or visit [floridastudiotheatre.org](http://floridastudiotheatre.org).



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# Allegro!

The Sarasota  
Ballet wows  
audiences  
around  
the globe.



**I**n an already rich arts community, The Sarasota Ballet quickly became the hottest ticket in town when Director Iain Webb took the reins in 2007.

Founded in 1991 by former Stuttgart Ballet dancer Jean Allenby-

Weidner, The Sarasota Ballet was one of Florida's cultural gems, but Webb was charged with putting this regional company on the international ballet map.

The first season he received a nod from eminent dance critic Clive Barnes, who said,

"It's a sensational season. I don't think any American company has ever done all these ballets before. It's a rarity." *The New York Times* critic Alastair Macaulay named them "America's foremost exponent of Ashton ballets" when he saw them the next season, highlighting their "remarkable grasp of Ashton's multilayered musicality."

Following a career with The Royal Ballet, where he was guided by British ballet legends Dame Ninette de Valois, Sir Frederick Ashton, and Sir Kenneth MacMillan, Webb worked closely with boundary-crashing, Tony Award-winning choreographer



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# The Trill Thing

The Sarasota Opera celebrates its 53rd season — and much more!

BY WAYNETTE GOODSON

**I**t's an exciting time for the internationally acclaimed Sarasota Opera.

Not only is the company enjoying a \$20 million theater renovation, it's about to embark on its 53rd season, topped off with a gala celebration to honor Maestro Victor DeRenzi's 30th anniversary as artistic director.

The kickoff production is Puccini's tender love story *Madama Butterfly* (Oct. 28–Nov. 15), then Bizet's fiery *Carmen* takes the stage on Feb. 11 with original spoken dialogue through March 24th.

Donizetti's tale of deceit, murder, and madness, *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Feb.

18–March 24), is followed by DeRenzi's first time conducting Verdi's masterpiece *Otello*, which marks the final five years of the Company's Verdi Cycle ending in 2016.

The season wraps up with Barber's *Vanessa*, a continuation of the company's new American Classics Series (March 10–24).

"Victor DeRenzi is simply the finest, most idiomatic Verdi conductor I've ever heard, and I'm not forgetting some much more celebrated names," writes arts critic Lawrence Johnson. Indeed, under DeRenzi's leadership, the company has garnered international attention as a place to experience rarely performed operatic works. He also created educational and outreach activities. Notably, the Sarasota Youth Opera Program introduces youth ages 8–18 to all aspects of opera.

One of the best parts for audiences is experiencing all this fine opera in the "Jewel on the Gulf," the former A.B. Edwards Theater, now completely restored to its Mediterranean Revival glory. It's quite the crescendo, considering the company's start in 1960 with a chamber-sized repertoire in the 320-seat Asolo Theater. Recognizing the need for a theater more conducive to opera, the company bought the former A.B. Edwards





Theater in downtown Sarasota in 1979 and first performed there five years later as the Sarasota Opera House.

After undergoing a \$20 million renovation, the theater reopened in March 2008 featuring a larger orchestra pit, expansive

lobby, new lounge spaces, more comfortable seating (replacing 50-year-old movie-style seats), and most of all, a private dining room. Today *Opera* magazine hails the theater as “one of the best places to view opera,” and Musical America dubbed it “one of America’s finest venues for opera.”

Over the course of three decades, Maestro DeRenzi has produced more than 100 different operas and conducted almost 600 performances since his start in 1983. (Equally impressive, the opera’s executive director, Susan T. Danis, has spent 12 years growing the opera’s budget from \$3.2 million to more than \$8.5 million.)

Come see the numbers add up by calling 941.328.1300 for subscriptions or by visiting the Sarasota Opera Box Office online or in person. Join in the excitement and experience a performance for yourself. You might even find yourself shouting “Bravo!”

Clockwise from top: View of Sarasota Opera House at sunset; Christina Bouras as Léïla and Jonathan Boyd as Nadir in the 2003 Sarasota Opera production of Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers*; inside the theater



**SARASOTA OPERA**

BOX OFFICE HOURS:  
Daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
and through intermission on  
performance evenings.  
61 N. Pineapple Avenue  
941.328.1300

[boxoffice@sarasotaopera.org](mailto:boxoffice@sarasotaopera.org)



**Celebrate  
Sarasota**

Art. Culture. Entertainment.

# What's That Sound?

The Sarasota Orchestra: Come as you are.  
Leave different.

**F**or more than 60 years, the Sarasota Orchestra has been entertaining local music lovers and visitors from around the world.

The 80-member orchestra performs more than 100 classical, pops, and multimedia concerts each

year and thrives as the oldest continuing orchestra in the state of Florida.

With five exhilarating series, the orchestra offers patrons a diverse mix of concerts from September to May. The Sarasota Orchestra also presents the world-renowned Sarasota Music Festival each June.

## Masterworks

The full orchestra presents its hallmark series of seven concerts featuring unprecedented variety and the opportunity to experience the talents of some of today's most dynamic conductors representing differing artistic and musical perspectives.

## Pops

Pops conductor Andrew Lane leads three vibrant concerts featuring selections from heralded Broadway shows, a tribute to some of jazz music's greats, and a salute to American icons.

## Great Escapes

This enjoyable series of six concerts continues the tradition of providing a delightful mix of pops-like music with a sprinkling of light classics interspersed with informative and colorful commentary by the conductor.



## Journeys to Genius

This popular multimedia series unveils the stories behind the great masters and provides insight into some of their most memorable works. In a fast-paced, 70-minute narrated format, audiences discover what makes these masterpieces so timeless, powerful, and exceptional.

## Chamber Soiree

Ensembles made up of orchestra musicians perform seven concerts of exceptional chamber music throughout the season.

As an arts leader in the community, the Sarasota Orchestra is dedicated to exquisite performance and first-class musical education. The orchestra's acclaimed music-education program includes the 50-year-old Youth Orchestra, a summer music camp, and the Sarasota Music Festival.

For more information visit  
[sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org).

To purchase tickets call  
the box office at  
941.953.3434. The box  
office is located at  
709 N. Tamiami Trail, in  
the Beatrice Friedman  
Symphony Center.





## 2012 Sarasota Music Festival June 4-23, 2012

**F**or three weeks each June, some of the world's most accomplished student musicians and faculty artists converge on Sarasota to study and perform great classical music. The Sarasota Music Festival is a magical combination of youthful promise and acclaimed talent that carries a reputation as one of the finest classical-music events in the world.

After a highly competitive review process, 58 exceptional students work side-by-side with a guest faculty composed of 40 music masters. In any given day during the festival, a student may rehearse in a faculty-coached ensemble, play in master classes, and perform on stage. Interspersed are unique opportunities for the public to hear these visiting artists rehearse or perform together.

The Sarasota Music Festival began in 1965 as a one-week event with seven guest mentors. Over the years, the festival continued to expand and receive national and international attention. In 1984, it was designated by the Florida State Legislature as the "Official Teaching and Performing

Festival of the State of Florida."

Today, the festival is led by artistic director Robert Levin, a world-renowned Mozart scholar, Harvard professor, and one of the most acclaimed concert pianists in the world. The faculty masters represent nearly all major American orchestras and a cross section of renowned music schools, conservatories, and institutes of music. The students range from professional-level musicians to superior students in music schools and conservatories. Festival students travel from around the world to participate.

Sarasota Music Festival audiences are entertained by faculty showcases, student and faculty chamber music performances, and Saturday symphonies with a student orchestra and student recitals. The "Levin Lectures" have become a festival favorite.

For more information about the Sarasota Music Festival, visit [sarasotaorchestra.org](http://sarasotaorchestra.org).



**Clockwise from left:** orchestra violinist Chung-Yon Hong, Sarasota Orchestra by the bay, and *Navigating the Bridge*, the 2009 Sarasota Music Festival poster



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**Art. Culture. Entertainment.**

# An Invitation to Visit

## The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

**S**elby Gardens is focused on furthering the understanding and appreciation of plant life, with emphasis on epiphytes, and to provide enjoyment to all who visit and experience the Gardens.

the public on July 7, 1975, and has since doubled in size to 14 acres.

Selby Gardens offers visitors a rich cultural experience. Guests of all ages can stroll through the lush natural beauty of the Gardens, have lunch at the cafe or under the banyan trees, attend classes and lectures, visit the Kid's Corner, and browse at the Garden Shop. The Gardens also offers exhibits in the historic mansion and special events including Lights in Bloom, Plant and Garden Festival, Asian Festival, and the Garden Music Series. Selby Gardens also offers majestic nuptial and reception venues to say "I Do."

Visitors are encouraged to come often to experience the new and ever-changing display of rare and exotic orchids, bromeliads, and other luscious plants in the Conservatory and in the Gardens. Selby Gardens is a stunningly beautiful showplace that delights more than 130,000 visitors each year.

See you in the Gardens!

Marie Selby was born Mariah Minshall in Wood County, West Virginia, in 1885 and later moved to Marietta, Ohio. She married William Selby in 1908, and together they bought seven acres of land bordering on Sarasota Bay and Hudson Bayou. Little did they realize this purchase would someday become an exquisite Sarasota bayfront landmark.

Marie Selby left her property as a gift to the community to be used as a botanical garden "for the enjoyment of the general public." Marie Selby Botanical Gardens officially opened to



PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SCOTT GARRETT (GREAT LAWN), CLIFF ROLES (MORTON BAY FIG), SCOTT GARRETT (KID POND), DR. ELLIOT LIVSTONE (RED ORCHID), CLIFF ROLES (YELLOW ORCHID)



The Gardens are open  
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. every day,  
with the exception of Christmas Day.

The Gardens closes at 3:00 p.m. on Thanksgiving  
Day, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve.

900 South Palm Avenue  
Sarasota, FL 34236  
941.366.5731 • [selby.org](http://selby.org)



Clockwise  
from top left:  
The Great Lawn,  
Moreton Bay Fig,  
Koi Pond, *Cattleya*  
*leopoldii* var.  
*pupurata* (red orchids),  
*Rhyncholaeliocattleya*  
Melinda Wheeler  
(yellow orchid)





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BY IVY LAMB

# Discovering the Secrets of the Sea

Despite humble beginnings, Mote Marine Laboratory has been on the cutting edge of marine science since the 1950s.

**I**t's 1955. In sleepy Placida, Florida, world-renowned scientist Dr. Eugenie Clark (also known as "Shark Lady") fashions a marine laboratory out of a one-room shack with the help of a few enthusiastic fishermen.



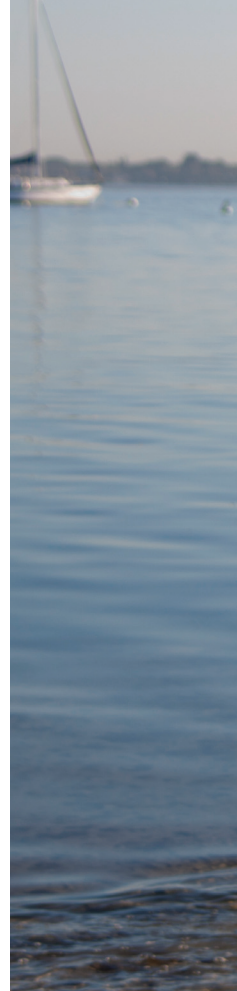
Fast-forward to 2011 in Sarasota and that one-room shack is now a 10.5-acre, state-of-the-art marine research facility called Mote Marine Laboratory (after benefactor William R. Mote), a 200-acre aquaculture farm east of its main campus, a smaller lab and outreach facilities in the Florida Keys, and a field station on Pine Island in Charlotte Harbor.

Mote Marine Laboratory, known for its popular aquarium and groundbreaking research, has become an integral part of the Gulf Coast community. One of the few independent nonprofit marine laboratories in the nation, Mote has a staff of 195, with more than 30 doctoral-level scientists. And while the lab is best known for its work in Florida, its scientists conduct research programs all over the world in places such as Mexico, Cuba,



Argentina, the Dominican Republic, the Middle East, and even the Arctic. Its distance-learning education program, SeaTrek, reaches K-12 students worldwide.

Over the course of five decades, Mote Marine Lab has expanded to cover many areas of research, including studies of aquatic toxicology, chemical fate and effects, environmental health, marine biomedical research,





marine immunology, marine microbiology, sensory biology, and behavior. Mote even has hospitals dedicated to treating dolphins, whales, and sea turtles.

One thing that hasn't changed: the spirit of discovery that drove Dr. Clark's original research. She was the first to discover that sharks can learn, a groundbreaking idea at the time. Today, Mote's Center for Shark Research is officially designated as a national center for shark research by Congress.

Mote Marine Laboratory also understands the link between humans and the ocean. From studies on the toxic algae that cause red tides, to research on shark immune systems that might offer treatment for human cancer, Mote tackles projects that directly affect the health of humans and ocean dwellers alike.

"One of the primary reasons we do our research is to help give the community better water quality, better seafood, and better health through research programs focusing on our coasts, on our fisheries, and on biomedical applications," says president and CEO Dr. Kumar Mahadevan. "Many marine

labs are attached to a university or to the government, but because we are independent, we can guide our research — quickly and reliably. We are able to do things that benefit our community the most because we have the support of our community."

Mote's influence on the local community can be measured in numbers, too. This past year, Mote Marine Laboratory staff published more than 150 scientific articles, textbooks, and book chapters, attracted more than 1,300 volunteers, and had an estimated economic impact of \$71 million.

"You can sit in your ivory tower and do any kind of research you want, but you have to communicate with your scientific colleagues, and the people in the local community have to know what you're doing," says Dr. Clark. "That's what I'm proud of. That Mote has developed from a tiny little laboratory where people study fish, to a place where people can come and learn."



Clockwise from far left: Dr. Eugenie Clark; a sea turtle rehabilitated at Mote is released on the beach in Sarasota; Protect Our Reefs license plate supports coral reef research; and Mote underwater robots monitor ocean water quality

