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January 2017 | www.crlmag.com

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**FRESH
START**

Kick off the New Year



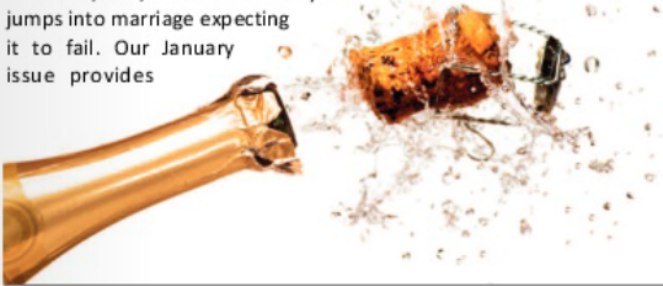
La fortuna aiuta gli audaci. "Fortune favors the bold."

2017 could be a "bold" year for all of us if we live without fear when we can. It gets harder and harder not to worry constantly about safety and many day-to-day news stories but living fearlessly and having supreme confidence in your

own wits this year will net a more tranquil and prosperous life. I would not write about this if I did not believe it or commit to it myself.

So much each year holds us back personally and professionally, let's target the "what do you have to lose" attitude and really charge at 2017, rather than backing into it with your eyes focused on the past. Eyes on the present and the future for us because we can outwit misfortune and live through adversity as we are counting on a bright future.

Certainly heading into a marriage takes a bold attitude. Optimism and love, too, but I doubt anyone jumps into marriage expecting it to fail. Our January issue provides



ideas and tips for the couples about to be married. I have been lucky to witness some pretty spectacular weddings this past year and one thing they all had in common was a success plan. Outstanding settings and venues, fabulous food, crazy great music resulted in joyful gatherings that many professionals helped to create.

Our inaugural coverage of the area's Best Lawyers takes place this month. We have enjoyed bringing this to you and hope that you will seek the advice of the "best" the area has to offer in law. Knowledge is power and these folks can provide you with the knowledge you need, for sure.

Finally, we also share with you the finalists in our Cover Companions Contest. The winner will not be announced until the February issue when that pet will appear on our cover. This has been another new venture for us and we have enjoyed this immensely. We also have a piece about traveling with your dog. This is becoming very popular and many extraordinary resorts, hotels and inns are making it easy and pleasurable. Read all about The Betsy in South Beach and you will see an amazing example of what you can enjoy with your four-legged companion.

Once again, *La fortuna aiuta gli audaci*. Let's make 2017 a happy, healthy and prosperous year.

Gratefully yours,
Vikki Moran

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vikki Moran".



Dogs and lovers of culture welcome: The Betsy

BY VIKKI MORAN
THE GRATEFUL TRAVELER

Betsy expansion

The Betsy has expanded since my visit and these are the exciting details.

To the west, two historic buildings whose architects were in large part responsible to the Art Deco architecture movement in South Beach, are being linked to The Betsy by a bridge, creating public art.

When renovation is fully complete, the footprint of The Betsy will comprise its current Ocean Drive entrance building—the Colonial Wing with 59 rooms and suites and a fully-restored Art Deco Wing with 70 rooms and suites (30 of which will have balconies), plus a new casual Italian restaurant.

The current Betsy property will add a rooftop pool with outstanding views of the Art Deco district and the ocean and the impressive Miami skyline. A second ocean view deck will be added and The Conservatory, which will remain a vibrant setting for the arts, will add an espresso bar, a performance stage and a new meeting space.

Leaving the family dog at home when traveling can be unbearable for some. Good news. Many hotels are now allowing you to bring your pet with you on vacation.

Some, like the Betsy on South Beach in Miami, can be superb properties in many ways and that escape experience can extend to your four-legged family member to create a real family experience with your dog (s).

If being a Forbes Four Star and AAA Four Diamond property is not enough, CCN named The Betsy as one of the world's great literary hotels. Jonathan Plutzik, owner, has assembled a true cultural pathway in the heart of a true party city, South Beach.

“Things that matter”

The luxury hotel, according to Plutzik, salutes “things that matter.” That policy centers philanthropy, arts, culture and education, offering events at no charge and open to the public in what some might call a culturally-starved Ocean Drive in South Beach. Ocean Drive would normally boast fish bowl-size cocktails, car cruising, strolling bikinis and many renowned night clubs. The Betsy serves as the community's artistic oasis. Hyam Plutzik, Jonathan's father was awarded the very desirable Knight Foundation Challenge Grant and was a three-time Pulitzer finalist in poetry. Unquestionably, he posthumously remains the boutique hotel's inspiration.

“Things that matter” as explained by the property's owner now include the family pet. As with everything at The Betsy, corporate philosophy means something! Embracing the dog-friendly environment extends to the employees who often bring their dogs to work to come along with the guests, especially the four-legged guests.

I know the environment of a pet-friendly workplace first hand as *Capital Region Living Magazine* often has dogs lying next to desks or breaking out into play to the amusement of the employees. I cannot say enough about embracing this in the office place for a more open and relaxed, creative atmosphere.

With your pet at your side

At The Betsy, you are welcome to share the fashionable and exquisitely beautifully decorated rooms with your pets. There is a fee but a portion is donated to pet charities, in keeping with the hotel's wide-ranging philanthropy. The fee is \$150 but half is used for the sanitation of the rooms and elimination of any potential pet allergies for the room's future use and the other half to support dog shelter activities throughout the world.

Pampering with your pooch is a new take on a couples massage. With your pup at your side you can enjoy magic fingers, aromatherapy and even healthy nibbles afterwards. If that is over the top for you, perhaps you would like to take a walk up and down Ocean Drive to experience a fairy-tale experience. How fun! The folks on the drive are one of a kind in their own right and the art-deco back drop is amazing.

I loved sitting with a cocktail and our dog Gia on the enchanting front porch that extends to Chef Laurent Tourondel's LT Steak & Seafood, where the culinary creations are only enhanced by South Beaches' only boutique hotel, The Betsy. There is never a reason to leave the property to eat and if seated outside, your pet is welcome to join you at LT's.

What's the history of the hotel? Built in 1942, it was immediately acclaimed for its Florida/Georgian architecture. With extensive renovations ending in 2007, it re-opened as the present day Betsy.

The Betsy needs to be appreciated and you have lots of ways to take it all in—whether strolling the halls of The Betsy to see some of the best photography ever taken of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, enjoying the breathtaking ocean views, taking a dip in the roof top pool or, believe it or not, just admiring the décor in your guest room with its Carrara marble and Thassos mosaic. The Betsy's unique philosophy on life, culture and philanthropy creates absolute perfection.

Pet travel resources: For great informational sites when traveling with pets, check out:

www.tripswithpets.com

petfriendlytravel.com

www.bringfido.com

