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Travel

16 PAGES OF
WARM-WEATHER
ESCAPES

SLIP INTO SPRING

By BETH LANDMAN

DRIVING south on Florida's scenic A1A from Delray Beach, there's a strip called Highland Beach that hugs the coast and serves as a gateway into Boca Raton. For decades, the shore there has been sleepy, with scattered motels, but just over two years ago an old Holiday Inn was transformed into the **Delray Sands** (\$229; DelraySandsResort.com) — a sleek and hip hotel. Its restaurant, *Latitudes*, is now packed with women in unexpectedly chic tops and young businessmen in brightly colored polo shirts. Since its debut, *Latitudes* has become one of the hottest spots in South Florida.

This unlikely newcomer is also a sign of an ongoing shift: Boca Raton, possibly best known for its comic characterization on "Seinfeld," is no longer merely a town where your grandparents retire.

"Boca is going through a renaissance, the way Delray did years ago," says Joel Altman, co-developer of the city's new shopping and residential plaza, *Park Place/Altis*, which opened in December and contains 69,000 square feet of retail and restaurants including *Phenomenom* (Phenomenom320.com), a nitrogen ice cream shop and bakery.

Hotels are popping up fast, too. A **Hyatt Place** (from \$179; BocaRatonDowntown.Place.Hyatt.com), with stylish suites and a rooftop pool, was unveiled in December; the old Boca Bridge Hotel was transformed into the updated **Waterstone** (from \$309; WaterstoneBoca.com). Next year, Mandarin Oriental

Spas, suites and
sushi, oh my!
Sunny **BOCA
RATON** is now
South Florida's
something-
for-everyone
destination

The
2014-renovated
Boca Raton Resort and
Club (left) has added
posh eateries and family-
friendly attractions to
lure a younger crowd
to SoFla.

See **BOCA** on Page 34

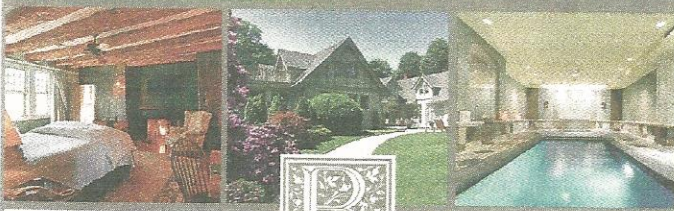
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