

# The Joys Of PALM BEACH COUNTY

BY SALLY FRIEDMAN

It was time.

**M**y husband and I had hit that proverbial wall: It was way too long since we'd escaped, even for a long weekend. We were both on overload, showing the signs of wear and tear of the sort that begs for a change of pace.

Besides, we wanted to celebrate a milestone anniversary. And we had frequent flier miles with a finite life span.

We could have chosen to go away for longer—more modestly—or shorter—more luxuriously. Years ago, we would have chosen the longer-for-less. At this stage of life, and in this economy, we went for more indulgent. Less can be lots more when it comes to runaway vacations.

This is how it came to pass that we recently found ourselves in the 200-foot long lobby of the Grand Dame of Palm Beach, the historic Breakers Hotel. It's been in the same spot since 1904, and for that long, it's hosted the rich and famous—and some just plain folks like us who wanted a taste of the good life for a couple of nights.

Designed by architect Leonard Schulze after the Boboli Gardens in Florence, the hotel's main fountain is a star attraction even before you set foot inside. The same architect who designed such landmarks as Manhattan's Pierre and Waldorf-Astoria used the Italian Renaissance as his inspiration for The Breakers, choosing the classic tradition to create grandeur.

So if you like your hotels sleek and modern, with every new-fangled bell and whistle, The Breakers is not for you. It's straight out of another era, with brocade furniture, soaring ceilings, gardens that seem tended by unseen elves.

For the first few minutes in that Breakers' lobby, my husband and I just gaped. The public rooms were so elaborate



*The Breakers*



*The Boca Resort*



*The Breakers' Garden*

*Top: In The Breakers' lobby, tapestries, chandeliers, Oriental rugs, and Regency armchairs all suggest that the Gilded Age lives on.*

*Center: The Boca Resort and Club is itself a tourist attraction.*

*Bottom: With its formal gardens and long, tree-lined approach, The Breakers was designed by architect Leonard Schulze after the Boboli Gardens in Florence.*