

Beyond the Brand: Storytelling in the Experience Economy

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Storytelling in the Experience Economy

What is the Experience Economy?



Experience Economy:

The shift from promoting places and attractions to intentionally design and orchestrate meaningful, memorable experiences that create emotional connection and lasting impact for the visitor.

What Travelers Actually Want

To **feel** something

To **understand** a place, not just visit it

To **take part and belong** in something that already exists

To **leave with something that stays with them**



Nearly 80% of consumers are shifting spending away from goods and toward experiences that deliver meaning, connection, and personal fulfillment.

- ***McKinsey; Mastercard; Deloitte***
Marketing Trends



“Customers who are emotionally connected to a brand have a 306% higher lifetime value.”

- **Harvard Business Review**



What is the Brand Storytelling?



Brand Storytelling:

The shaping of narratives, moments and interactions that allow visitors to emotionally connect with, belong to and feel something meaningful.

Brand Storytelling Framework

01 The Hero

Identify your Brand Pillar(s).

- One theme
- One idea
- All Pillars ladder up to the Brand

This can become the paid expression of the brand.

02 Dig In

Identify the deeper story inside the Brand pillar.

- People
- Place
- History
- Craft
- Environment
- Tradition

This is where the story moves from message to meaning.

03 Assets & Channels

Develop the owned story experience.

- Video
- Photography
- Editorial
- Audio
- Interviews
- Landing pages

This is where audiences consume the story in their own way and start to lean in.

04 Platform Adaptation

Translate the story across channels.

- Social content
- Short-form video
- Email features
- Blogs
- Interactive components

The story flexes without losing its core.

05 Amplification

Extend the narrative beyond owned channels.

- PR outreach
- Editorial pitching
- Media partnerships
- Influencer collaborations

The story earns credibility and scale. It becomes discoverable.



**What are your
brand stories?**

Real World Examples



MOMENTS LIKE THESE ARE

ONLY

FOUND HERE.



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GARDEN & GUN

DUE SOUTH

TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE FOR THE SOUTHERN SOUL

★



SUSAN B. BARNES
G&G CONTRIBUTOR


I Just Got Back from...

Naples, Florida. During my parents' recent visit with me in Tampa, I thought it would be fun to take them for a weekend getaway to a different part of the Sunshine State. We headed south to Naples, known for its soft, sugar-white beaches; art galleries and museums; and life on the edge of the Everglades. Here, our picks for a weekend getaway:

- Seeking out stone crabs:** This time of year is all about stone crabs in Florida; the seasonal delicacy is available at seafood markets and restaurants like *Quinn's on the Beach* from mid-October through the first of May. Our visit coincided with the annual *Everglades Seafood Festival* in the small fishing village of Everglades City, also known as the Stone Crab Capital of the World. We were but three of the tens of thousands who traveled to the sliver of land for a weekend of live music and locally sourced seafood.
- Appreciating art:** We popped into the *Naples Art Institute* to check out the stunning three-dimensional paintings by *Tommaso Albertini*, a native of Naples, Italy, and the artist in residence through June 1.
- Exploring paradise:** My dad is a beach lover, so it was only natural we checked into *JW Marriott Marco Island Beach Resort* at the edge of the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Though the temperatures were chilly by Florida standards, we enjoyed bundling up and walking the sand in search of shells and shark teeth. And, of course, watching the sun set over the Gulf of Mexico never gets old, whatever the weather.

STONE CRAB MUSTARD SAUCE

- 2 cups mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup smooth Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup whole grain Dijon mustard
- 5 tbsp. horseradish
- 3 tbsp. Frank's RedHot sauce
- 3 tbsp. lemon juice
- 3 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce



GARDEN & GUN

RECIPES

Claws for Celebration, It's Stone Crab Season

A guide to a Florida delicacy, plus a tasty seafood dipping sauce

BY SUSAN B. BARNES
RECIPE BY KRISTIN NEMETH

March 19, 2024




PHOTO: JENNIER HARRIS

Even with its worldwide acclaim, the stone crab industry is actually quite small; Kelly Kirk, co-owner of [Kirk Fish Co.](#) in the small fishing village of Goodland between Marco Island and Everglades City, says there are less than one thousand commercial stone crabbers throughout the state. “When you enjoy stone crabs,” she says, “know that there are fishermen and families who are working to make sure we are preserving the industry.”


The [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) provides strict guidelines for both commercial and recreational stone crabbers, specifying the harvest season (October 15 through May 1) as well as limiting harvest numbers. Even with these regulations, some misinformation has long been floating around regarding which claw can be harvested each season (left or right.)

☰ YouTube Search



**Chef Gerald Sombright,
JW Marriott, Marco Island**

There's No Crab Like Stone Crab

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It's officially stone crab season and there's no better way to enjoy this crustacean's delectable claws than with dipping sauces that enhance the crab's naturally sweet flavor. Chef Gerald Sombright from the JW Marriott Marco Island Beach Resort shared these tangy and spicy sauce recipes with us, both guaranteed to up your stone crab game.

Ingredients

- 1 cup mustard seeds
- 1 ½ cups champagne
- 2 tbsp. honey
- salt and pepper to taste

Champagne Mustard Sauce Recipe



Ingredients

- 1 cup Heinz chili sauce
- ½ cup gochujang
- 2 dashes Worcestershire
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tbsp. fresh horseradish
- salt and pepper to taste

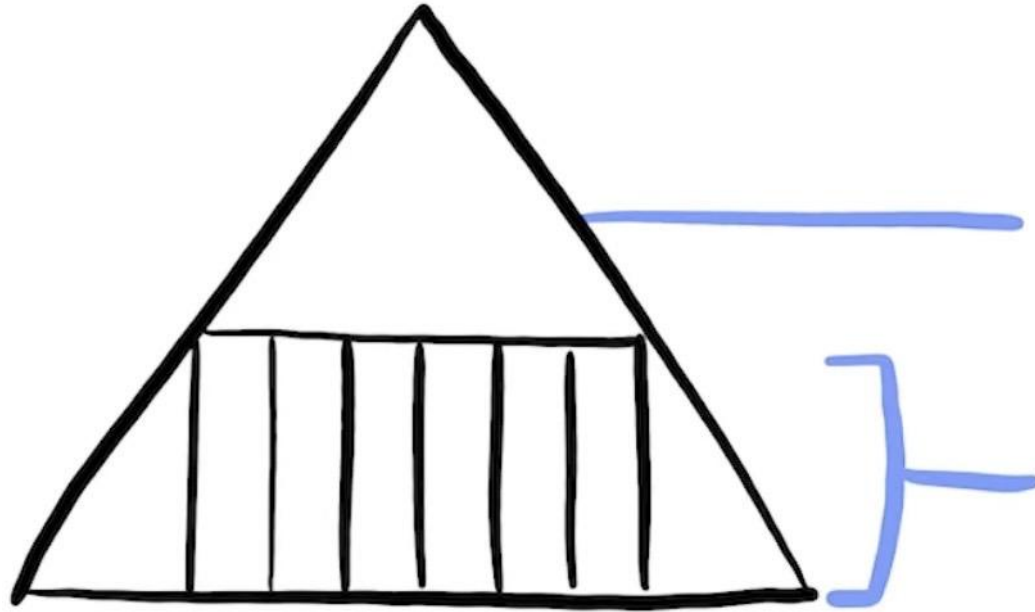
Spicy Cocktail Sauce Recipe



Watch: There's No Crab Like Stone Crab

Chef Gerald Sombright from the JW Marriott Marco Island Beach Resort prepares tangy and spicy sauces guaranteed to up your stone crab game.

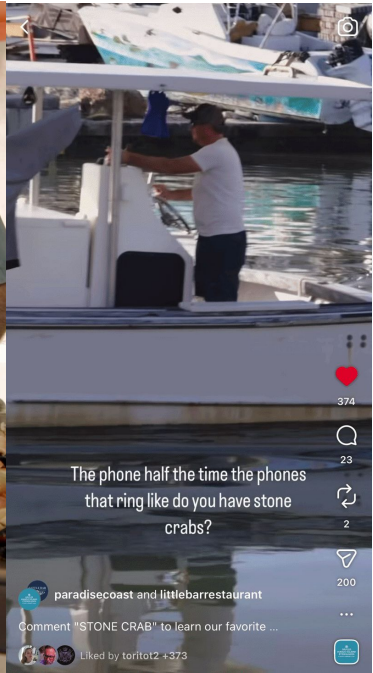
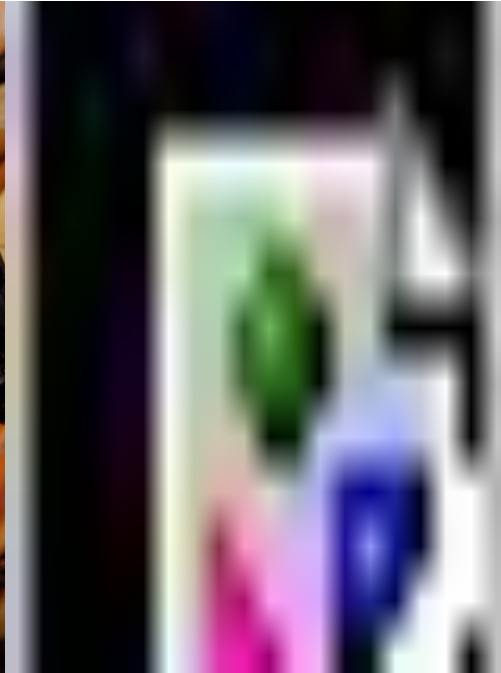
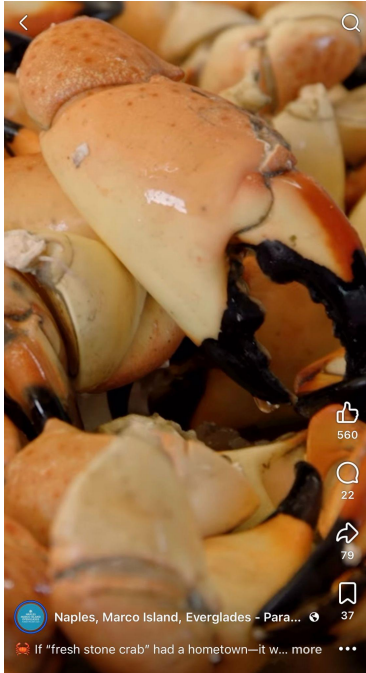
The Content Pyramid



**“Hero” or
Main Story**

**Shoulder
Assets**

Shoulder Assets



Shoulder Assets

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FLORIDA'S PARADISE COAST



It's Almost Time to Get Cracking

The wait is nearly over—Stone Crab Season returns to Florida's Paradise Coast on October 15th. And if you're thinking about planning a trip, now's the time.

The great news? We've put together everything you need to get started: a list of top restaurants and fish markets, itineraries you can follow for tasting tours and festivals, and a Stone Crab Tasting Pass that'll help you keep track of it all.

Head to our new stone crab page to find all of this information in one central location. Let the countdown to stone crab season begin! For the freshest stone crab claws, ONLY Paradise will do.

PLAN YOUR TRIP

What's Happening in Paradise Coast

Share the love by tagging your Instagram posts with hashtag [#ParadiseCoast](#)



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A close-up photograph of two large stone crab claws resting on a bed of crushed ice. The claws are bright orange and have large, dark, pincers. A small white bowl filled with a creamy dipping sauce is visible to the right. Fresh green herbs are scattered on top of the crab. The background is a plain white plate.


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**TASTE THE TRADITION OF STONE CRAB
SEASON ON FLORIDA'S PARADISE COAST**

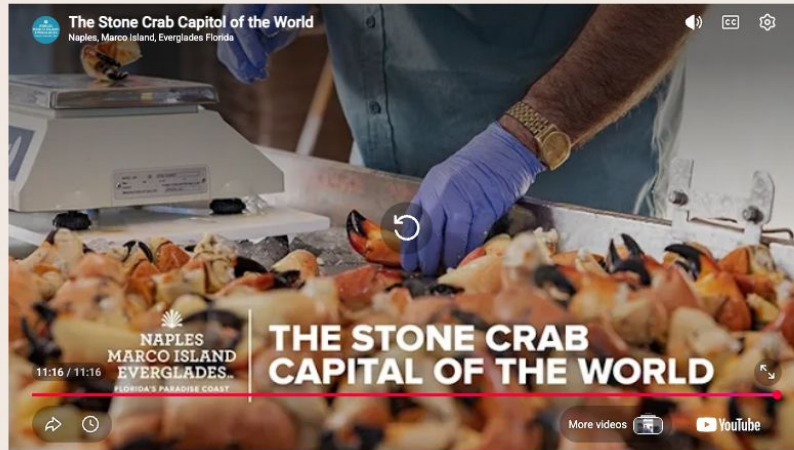


Stone crab season runs from October 15 through May 1, and there is no better place to savor it than Florida's Paradise Coast. From Everglades City (the Stone Crab Capital of the World) to the fine dining rooms of Naples and the working fish houses of Goodland, this coveted delicacy continues to thrive thanks to deep-rooted fishing traditions, family-run seafood markets, and lively waterfront festivals. With stone crab this fresh, you can taste why this is Paradise in every sense.

Check-in → Check-out Guests 1 SEARCH

CRACK INTO THE STONE CRAB CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

Discover Everglades City, where stone crab season is shaped by generations of local crabber families. Follow the journey of the stone crab claw from trap to table, and experience a tradition rooted in the rhythm of the tides and the flavors of the Gulf.





The Ultimate Guide to Stone Crab Season

Discover everything you need to know about stone crab season on Florida's Paradise Coast, from the history of the industry to where to find the freshest claws.

[Read The Guide](#)



Stone Crab Tasting Tour Itinerary

Foodies will love this flexible itinerary highlighting top restaurants, markets, and must-try stone crab experiences during the season.

[Take The Tour](#)



TASTE PARADISE AT THE NAPLES STONE CRAB FESTIVAL

In fall every year, Tin City comes alive during the 15th Annual Naples Stone Crab Festival. Enjoy the sound of live music along the waterfront, browse local vendors, and savor stone crab served fresh by the pound. With free admission and scheduled entertainment throughout the

The Ultimate Guide to Stone Crab Season on Florida's Paradise Coast



Naples, Marco Island and the Everglades is the birthplace of the stone crab industry and one of the nation's largest suppliers of stone crab claws. Each year, from October 15th to May 1st, this area becomes the epicenter of stone crab activity, producing up to 40% of the state of Florida's stone crab supply. Here's everything you need to know about this famed crustacean and its influence on Florida's Paradise Coast.

Everglades City: Stone Crab Capital of the World

[Everglades City](#), with a population of around 500, is known as the Stone Crab Capital of the World. The town's history with stone crab dates back decades, thanks to pioneering figures like Loren "Totch" Brown.

Commercial fishermen once considered stone crabs a nuisance, often accidentally catching them in their traps instead of blue crabs. However, Brown claims to have originally recognized their potential, "inventing" the stone crab industry. "The thought came to my mind that they hadn't been commercialized any place in the United States, and that there ought to be some way to do it," Brown wrote in his memoir *Totch: A Life in the Everglades*.

Now deceased, Totch is credited by many with pioneering what is now a multimillion-dollar business and a lifeblood of the local economy, alongside tourism. Family-owned fisheries line the waterfront in Everglades City and Goodland, and generations of crabbers continue the tradition.

A Foodie's Itinerary for the Naples Stone Crab Festival



The 15th Annual [Naples Stone Crab Festival](#) returns to [Tin City](#) from Friday, October 24 to Sunday, October 26, 2025, marking the beginning of Florida's [stone crab season](#) with a weekend of seafood, live music, and fun along the historic waterfront. Admission is free, making it a must-do fall event for both locals and visitors hoping to taste fresh stone crab claws. With this in mind, we've put together this flexible 3-4 day itinerary to help you make the most of the festival and discover nearby attractions across [Naples](#), [Marco Island](#), [Goodland](#), and [Everglades City](#).

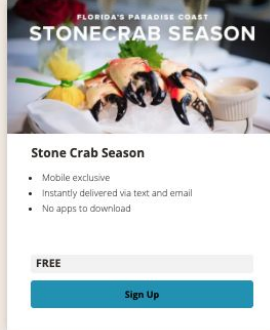
Thursday, October 23 – Arrival and Dinner in Downtown Naples

Arrive early to check into your hotel and settle in before the weekend crowds. If you're hoping to stay close to Tin City (where the festival takes place), the closest option is [Bayfront Inn 5th Avenue](#). It's directly across the street, so you won't even have to worry about parking! Other great options include the [Inn on Fifth](#) for a boutique stay in the heart of downtown or [Bellasera Resort](#) for suite-style accommodations.



DOWNLOAD THE STONE CRAB TASTING PASS

Make the most of your visit to Florida's Paradise Coast during stone crab season with this free pass. Browse restaurants and seafood markets where you can find the freshest stone crab and save them to make trip planning easier than ever before!



Step 1 - Get Your Pass

This mobile exclusive passport is a collection of curated attractions, retailers, restaurants and more, offering deals and discounts to redeem during your visit.



Step 2 - Receive Text

Your passport will be instantly delivered to your phone via text and email and is ready to use immediately! There is no app to download. Your pass can be saved to your phone's home screen for easy one-tap access.



Step 3 - Redeem

When visiting a participating business, simply present your phone to the attendant or staff member to redeem available discounts.

An aerial photograph of a beach area with buildings on the left and the ocean on the right.

CATCH EVERY BITE OF STONE CRAB NEWS

Crack into exclusive tips, event updates, and trip ideas for stone crab season on Florida's Paradise Coast.

First Name*

Last Name*

Email*



Impact



Real World Examples





Stargazing On The Sea

Enjoy a complimentary private river boat cruise from the resort led by our partners at **Paddles by the Sea** when you book your stay over these dates.

Package Includes:

- Stargazing talk led by local astronomer and president of Mission Astronomy Group, David Brown aboard a riverboat
- Up to 6 people
- Meet at marina at 7:00 p.m. to make evening sunset, tour departs at 7:30 p.m.

2026 Available Dates:

- May 22nd & 23rd
- June 19th & 20th
- July 17th & 18th
- August 20th & 21st
- September 25th & 26th
- October 23rd & 24th
- November 28th
- December 11th & 12th

To inquire about this offer, email us [HERE](#).

*TERMS • CONDITIONS

LIFESTYLE > TRAVEL

3 Hotels That Offer Out-Of-This-World Stargazing Experiences

By [Brittany Anas](#), Contributor. © I cover travel, specializing in a... [Follow Author](#)

Many hotels have in-room telescopes or stargazing kits to appeal to travelers who enjoy exploring the night sky while on vacation. But some properties are going to, well, infinity and beyond to make vacation that much more special for stargazers.

From a boat ride with an astronomer in Florida to a hotel nestled in a Dark Sky Park in Arizona and "star bathing" amid California's majestic redwoods, consider these three vacations to be written in your stars.

Go Stargazing on the Sea with Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel and Spa in Florida

You know Florida as the "Sunshine State." But the stars twinkling above the Atlantic put on quite the stellar after-hours show, too. Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel and Spa, an oceanfront property on Florida's central Treasure Coast, offers a complimentary stargazing on the sea program through a partnership with Paddles by the Sea. Guests can embark on a nighttime riverboat cruise that's led by a local astronomer, who is also the president of Mission Astronomy Group, and view stars and planets through a telescope. While the celestial journey is free for guests, reservations must be booked 48 hours in advance and are available on a first come, first serve basis. The private river boat tour departs from the Indian River Lagoon and picnic snacks are available from the hotel's onsite restaurant Heaton's. Upcoming 2021 stargazing at sea dates are Oct. 15-16 and Nov. 12-13.

SPACE TRAVEL

VIE
MAGAZINE

THE NEW FRONTIER

BY STEVE LARESE

Space tourism is looking up, and so are earthbound star lovers.

For the earthbound, inns, public lands, and observatories cater to those curious about the cosmos. From curated sky tours at well-appointed properties to desert camping in the middle of seemingly nowhere, these stellar destinations have dark skies and telescopes to literally peer through time and space to star clusters, nebulae, moons, and planets in our own Milky Way galaxy and neighboring galaxies beyond. Knowledgeable guides at properties train telescopes on celestial objects for guests and explain what they're looking at. Here are just a few destinations around the country where telescopes are focused on star lovers:

Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel & Spa in Vero Beach, Florida, offers its new Stargazing on the Sea package that takes up to six guests on a private float trip down the Indian River Lagoon with a member of the local Mission Astronomy Group. The free experience for guests must be booked forty-eight hours in advance; check the resort's website for dates.

[VeroBeachHotelandSpa.com/event-space/hotel-meeting-packages](#)

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LAND & CONSERVATION

See Stars Close to Home in the South

You don't have to travel to the middle of nowhere to peep stars,

During [Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel & Spa's](#)

complimentary [Stargazing on the Sea](#) experience, David Brown, a local astronomer and the president of Mission

Astronomy Group, joins guests on a private riverboat

cruise captained by [Paddles by the Sea](#), explaining all that

can be seen in the night sky with the naked eye and high-

powered binoculars.



PHOTO: DAVID BROWN/MISSION ASTRONOMY GROUP

A lunar eclipse from a Stargazing on the Sea experience with David Brown.

DESTINATIONS GUIDES TRENDS & TIPS VIDEO

NEWS • STARGAZING

This Florida Hotel Will Let You Stargaze from a Private Riverboat Alongside an Astronomer

Guests at the Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel & Spa can take a free cruise to view the stars.

By [Cadyn Hill](#)

Published on May 28, 2021 at 11:42 AM

While most people will associate Florida with Disney, white sandy beaches, and the inevitable "Florida Man" incident, it's also an epic spot for stargazing. A local hotel is taking advantage of that with a unique—and free—stargazing experience for its guests.

Those staying at the Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel & Spa, which is located roughly two hours from both Orlando and Fort Lauderdale, can enjoy Florida's stargazing night sky from a private nighttime riverboat cruise down the Indian River Lagoon. Even better, they can do this alongside a local astronomer.

"For years, we've featured stargazing talks on our pool deck and have always received positive feedback from our guests about the experience," Awet Siim, general manager at Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel & Spa, told *Travel + Leisure*. "Given our oceanfront location and access to the Indian River, we thought what better way to amplify this experience than by connecting our boating offerings with stargazing."

The Stargazing on the Sea package is free to hotel guests and includes a picnic. However, it's only available on certain days, which are chosen by an astronomer to feature the best stargazing opportunities. The next cruises, available to six guests, are on June 18 and 19, as well as on July 16 and 17.

Reservations must be booked 48 hours in advance. Whether the cruise takes place also depends on the weather, and there's a four-guest minimum.

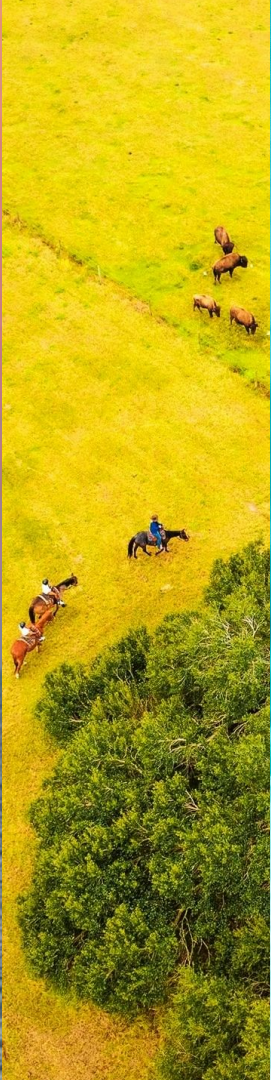
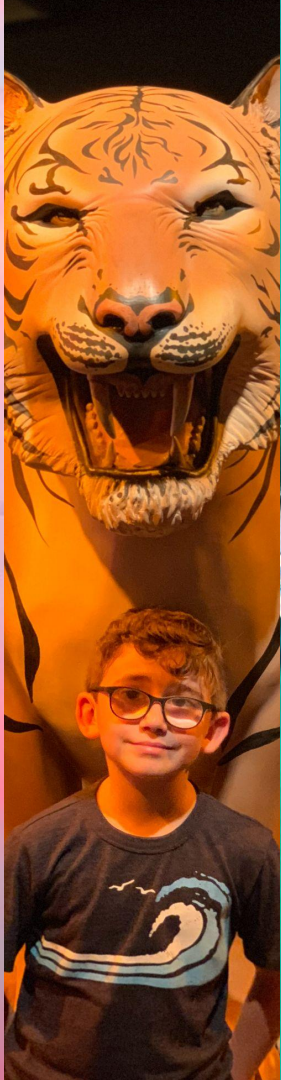
PALM BEACH
ILLUSTRATED

Staycation Under the Stars in Vero Beach

Book a room at the [Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel & Spa](#) to take part in the recently launched [Stargazing on the Sea](#) experience

By [skyesherman](#) - September 29, 2022

What better excuse for a staycation than to commune with nature? Book a room at the [Kimpton Vero Beach Hotel & Spa](#) to take part in the recently launched Stargazing on the Sea experience, during which up to six guests can enjoy a complimentary riverboat cruise with local outfitter Paddles by the Sea. On the post-sunset voyage, guests will be treated to unfettered over-water views of the cosmos and a stargazing talk by David Brown, a local astronomer and president of Mission Astronomy Group. The program is free to guests, with reservations available on a first-come, first-served basis. Dates through the end of the year are October 7 and 8, November 4, and December 2 and 3.



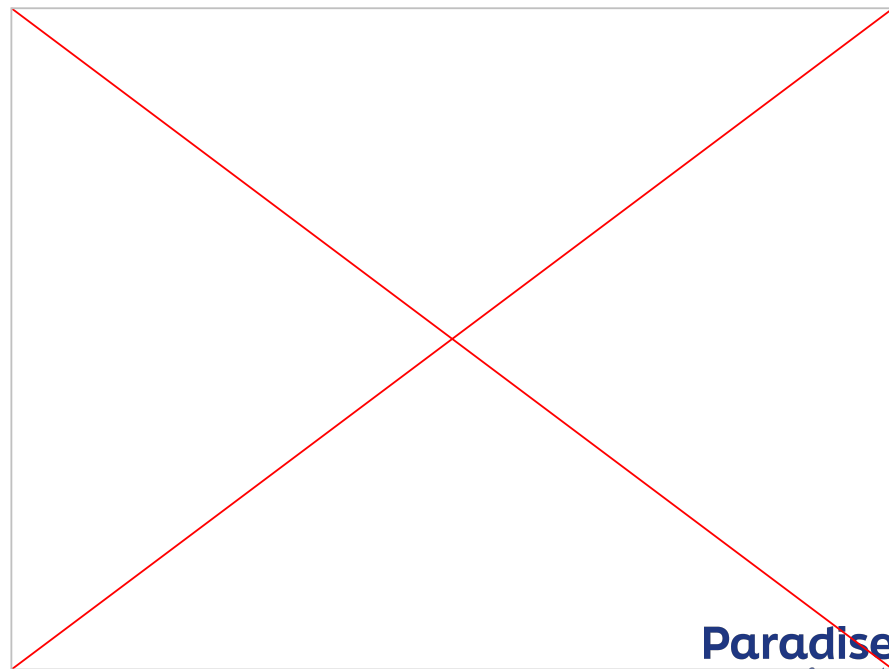
84% of AI citations come from earned media

— Muck Rack, What Is AI Reading? (May 2026)



Real World Examples





Takeaways

1. Travelers aren't just choosing a place on a map
They're seeking experiences that create meaning and memory
2. Brand Storytelling isn't your campaign
It's an ecosystem across content, place, people, and moments
3. The most powerful stories are
Grounded in real experience and local truth
4. Create with intention
Turn one story into a system that shows up everywhere
5. Specificity creates value
General descriptions make things interchangeable, specific ones make them unforgettable

An aerial photograph of a coastal town and beach. The scene includes a sandy beach with many people and umbrellas, a long wooden pier extending into the turquoise ocean, and a cluster of buildings and a parking lot on the left. The sky is clear and bright. Overlaid on the center of the image is the text "THANK YOU" in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

THANK
YOU



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