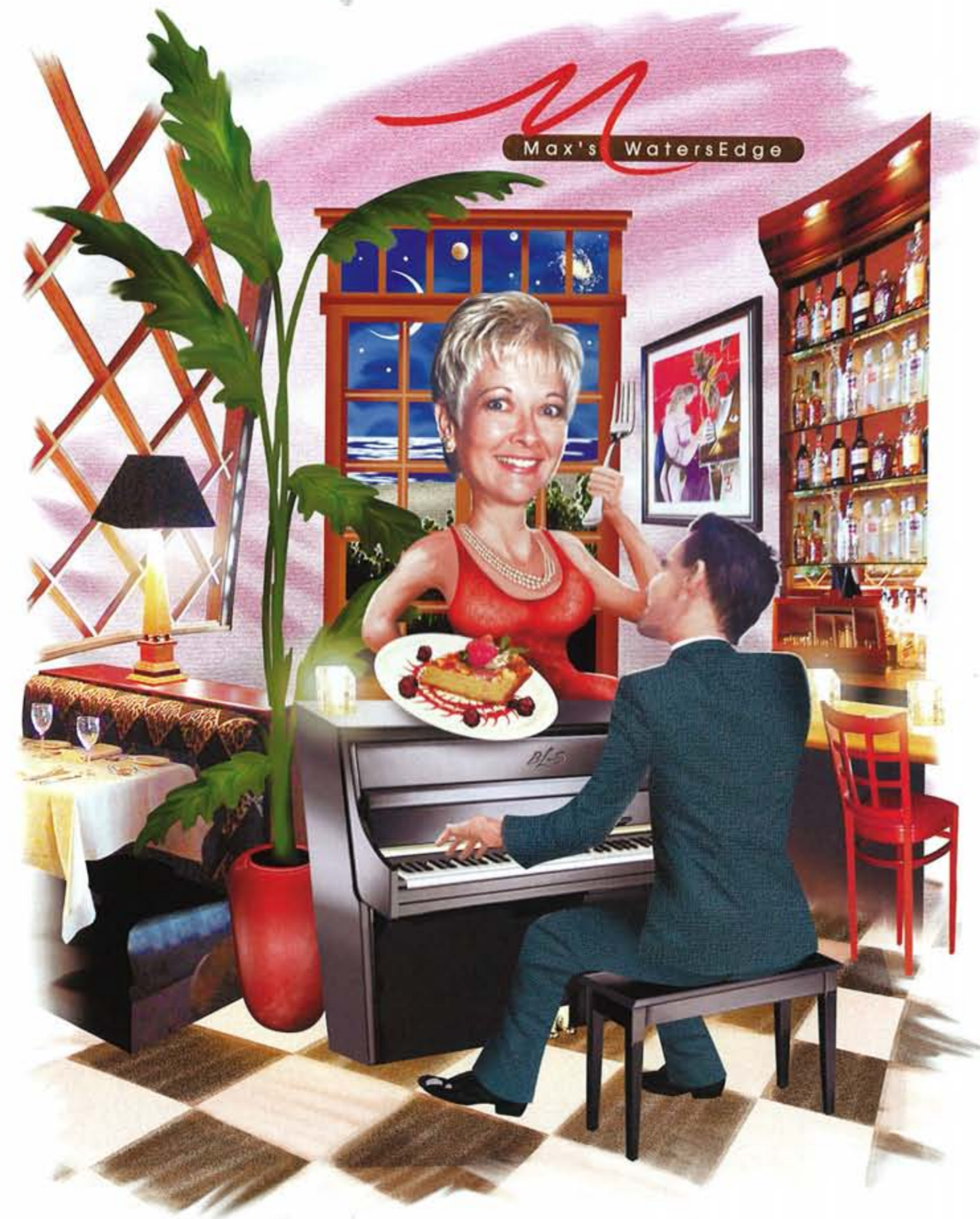


South
Florida's Most
Romantic
Places

Max's WatersEdge



Her quest was common, her passion extraordinary. She wanted — no, desperately desired — to discover the most romantic places in South Florida. In a land of steamy hotels, palm-fringed waterways and exotic restaurants, finding *the* hottest spots seemed nearly impossible. But she was undaunted. ♣ She doggedly pursued the experts — South Florida romance writers. If anyone would know the best places to jump-start a heart, she reasoned, they would. ♣ She threw herself at their feet and pleaded for their insight. Moved by her zeal, and, frankly, anxious to be rid of her, they relented. Here, then, are the fruits of her labors — a sextet of romance writers' own favorite romantic settings.

Love Scenes

By Elizabeth Rahe

Illustrations
By

Bonnie Laliky-Seibert

← **An Intimate Dinner At Max's WatersEdge**, Plaza del Mar, Ocean Boulevard and A1A, Manalapan, 561-588-5445.

After a grueling week saving various intergalactic alliances from invaders and falling in love with incredibly handsome space pirates, science fiction/fantasy romance novelist Linnea Sinclair longs to relax, snuggle with her husband and enjoy an excellent dinner. Their favorite spot is Max's WatersEdge Restaurant in Manalapan.

"Don't let the strip-mall address fool you. Inside is a treasure of superb food, a trendy but warm atmosphere and — my favorite — a dimly lit piano bar with a very handsome bartender (his name's Gary). Max's Crème Brûlée Pie is an out-of-this-world experience to share with someone you love.

"After dinner, walk across the street to Lantana Public Beach. It's perfect for an after-dinner stroll, just to keep an eye on the doings in the galaxy, you know..."

LINNEA SINCLAIR, a former news reporter and retired private investigator, is now an award-winning author of fantasy and science-fiction romance. Her latest novels are *Finders Keepers* (NBI, 2001) and, under her pen name Megan Sybil Baker, *Wintertide* (LTD Books, 2001). She lives with her husband and their five cats in Hypoluxo. For more, see her Web site: <http://Personal.mia.bellsouth.net/mia/l/l/linneafi/LSweb.html>.

→ **An Evening At The Biltmore Hotel**

1200 Anastasia Ave., Coral Gables, 305-445-1926.

Historical romance novelist Heather Graham cannot resist the lure of the past, even in her own back yard. She finds that the Biltmore Hotel's 75-year legacy is alive in its grand rooms and manicured grounds.

"The Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables is, in my opinion, one of the most lovely, romantic places in South Florida. The architecture is beautiful. George Merrick (co-developer of the hotel) was a dreamer with a feel for the senses, and there is a definite touch of

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A Guitar Serenade At Crandon Park Beach

4000 Crandon Blvd., Key Biscayne, 305-361-7385 or 305-361-5421.

Once part of a huge coconut plantation, Crandon Park Beach on Key Biscayne now attracts millions of visitors to its calm, tree-lined shore. Novelist Sandra Madden recalls a different attraction several decades ago — a fellow student named Dave.

"One memorable night from our University of Miami days, we barbecued at Crandon Park on a moonlit night. And then Dave got out his guitar and sang, *Just the Way You Look Tonight*. Nothing that romantic has happened since!"

After their student days, the two went their separate ways. He went on to play manager Reuben Kincaid on *The Partridge Family* TV series. She went on to become a TV producer and to raise two children on her own. They reconnected four years ago.

Now Sandra writes romance novels, and Dave claims to be a gigolo.

SANDRA MADDEN is the author of seven contemporary and historical romance novels. She and her husband, Dave, live in Miami with their blind and deaf cocker spaniel, Joe Cocker. Her latest books are *Comfort and Joy* (Zebra, 2001) and *Heaven Sent* (Leisure, Jan., 2002). For more on her books, see her web site at www.sandramadden.com.

A Stroll Through Vizcaya Museum And Gardens

3251 S. Miami Ave., Miami, 305-250-9133.

Romance novelist Marcia King-Gamble has a tough time picking her favorite romantic spot. She mentions the lush surroundings of Miami's Deering Estate and the palm-fringed caves and grottoes of Coral Gables' Venetian Pool. She even finds romance on a sunset Water Taxi ride through Fort Lauderdale's waterways. And then there's Vizcaya...

"Picture the backdrop, an Italian Palazzo. The style is Renaissance, the setting formal and elegant. Beautiful grounds that go on forever, and Biscayne Bay only a stone's throw away. There are acres of gardens to stroll through, tinkling fountains and pools that cascade. How can you not fall in love with love? How can you not fall in love with him?"

MARCIA KING-GAMBLE is the author of six romance novels and two novellas. She lives in Fort Lauderdale and has dual careers. By day, she is a cruise-line executive; by night, she writes. Her latest release can be found in the *Island Bliss* anthology. (St. Martin's Press, February 2002). Visit her Web site at www.Lovemarcia.com.

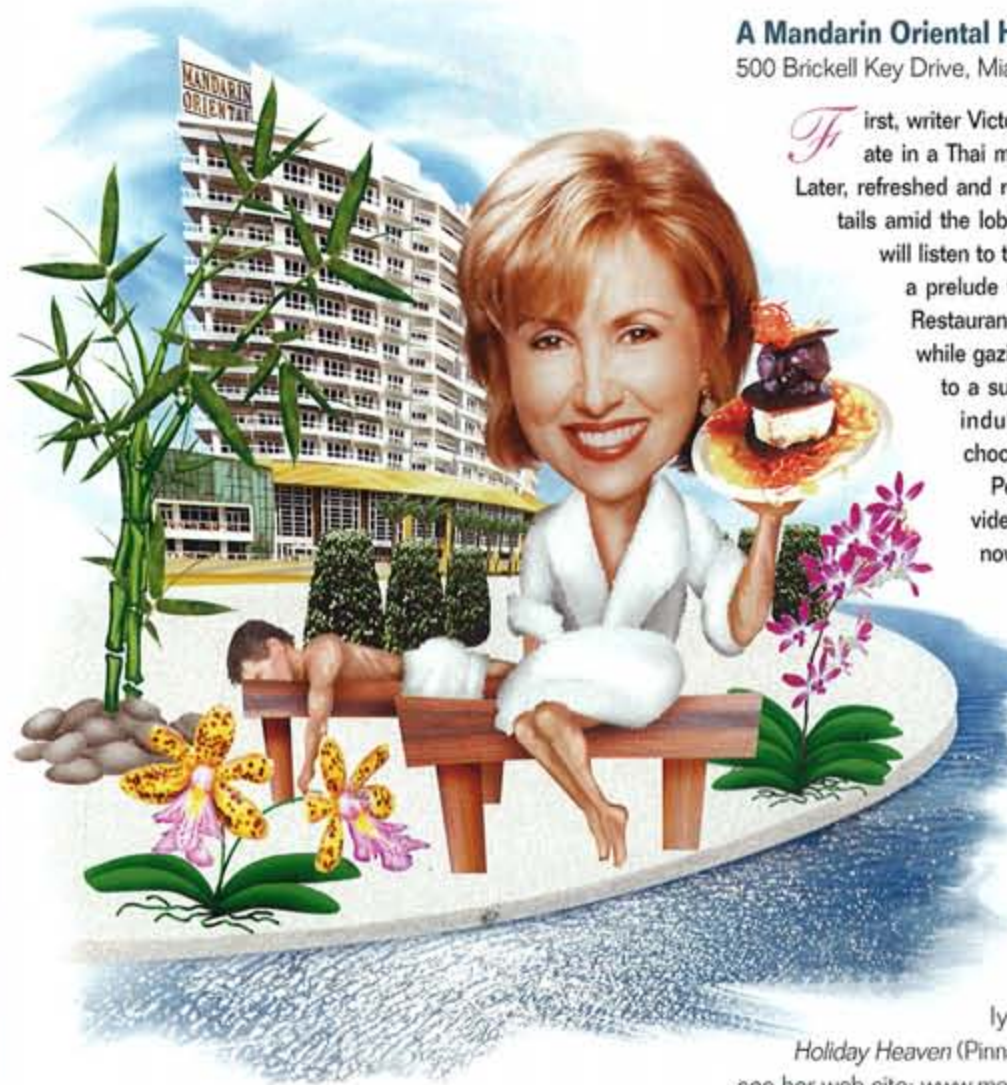


An Evening At The Biltmore FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Old-World charm. Despite the fact that it's in my neighborhood, I've actually stayed there in a room with a balcony overlooking the pool and golf course. You can catch a cool breeze, see the moonlight reflected on the water, and soft shadows over the grounds."

HEATHER GRAHAM, who also writes as Heather Graham

Pozzessere and Shannon Drake, has more than 20 million books in print. She lives with her husband and five children in Miami. She recently became a certified diver and finds the sport wonderfully romantic. Her upcoming book, *Hurricane Bay* (Mira hardcover), due out in April, is set in Miami and Key Largo. Find out more at www.booktalk.com/HGraham/.



A Mandarin Oriental Hotel Getaway

500 Brickell Key Drive, Miami, 305-913-8288.

First, writer Victoria Marquez imagines, the lovers will luxuriate in a Thai massage at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel spa. Later, refreshed and relaxed, they will sip bellinis or mojito cocktails amid the lobby's exotic orchids and bamboo trees. They will listen to the sensual sounds of Roberto Perera's harp, a prelude to a pleasurable evening. Moving into Azul Restaurant, the couple will enjoy a delectable dinner, while gazing out at Biscayne Bay. Then they will retire to a sumptuous, flower-filled suite, where they will indulge in French champagne and luscious chocolate truffles.

Perhaps Marquez' sensuous scenario will provide inspiration for an upcoming story line. For now, it's simply a romantic getaway she is planning for herself and Paul, her husband of 27 years.

"This is my idea of romantic paradise," she says.

VICTORIA MARQUEZ is the author of a romance anthology and three contemporary romance novels set in South Florida. She lives in Coral Gables with her husband and their two daughters. When she's not writing or reading, one of her favorite pastimes is observing people, especially those in love. Her newest release is

Holiday Heaven (Pinnacle Encanto, 2001). For more information, see her web site: www.members.tripod.com/vickoch.

A Romantic Picnic At Anchor, Lake Seminole, Fort Lauderdale.

A starry sky, an anchored sailboat, a gourmet feast and thou — that's romance, says author Kathleen Pickering. South Florida waterways offer many placid sites for romantic repasts, but her favorite is tiny Lake Seminole in Fort Lauderdale (west of Hugh Taylor Birch State Recreation Area and north of the Sunrise bridge.)

"Bring a bottle of fine wine, hors d'oeuvres, a roasted chicken, steamed asparagus, crusty bread and, of course, chocolate-dipped strawberries. Pop your favorite music in the CD player, and you're set for the night. Literally. It's the perfect setting for a sleepover, with water caressing the hull and night birds calling in the park. Sunrise brings another morning adventure . . ."

KATHLEEN PICKERING's writing career involves free-lance work for newspapers, human-interest organizations, as well as domestic and foreign retail market reports. She also conducts writing workshops. *Echoes of Love* (LionHearted, 2000), a paranormal romance, is her first published novel. She lives with her husband and two sons in Fort Lauderdale and is at work on her next novel. Find out more at <http://lionhearted.com/kpickering.htm>.

