

# Vacation Guide

## St. Petersburg offers many tourists sites



Built in 1925, the sumptuous Ringling mansion was inspired by the Doge's Palace on the Grand Canal in Venice, Italy.

St. Petersburg, on the Gulf Coast of Florida, has long had a reputation as a home for retirees. There are wooden benches on many of the streets as well as in the parks to enable elderly people to rest while out on their daily walks.

But the city also has plenty to offer for younger people, particularly short-

term vacationers who welcome a sojourn to sand and sunshine while northern cities are still battling snowfalls and freezing temperatures. St. Petersburg is in full swing throughout the winter months and its climate is one of the best in North America.

Many of the city's tourist attractions are grouped close

to each other along the edge of Tampa Bay. One of the most interesting is a replica of HMS Bounty, the ship in which Captain Bligh faced the mutinous crew led by Fletcher Christian. The replica was built in Nova Scotia for the re-make of the film Mutiny on the Bounty. You can go aboard to see the cramped quarters

in which the crew lived.

A facsimile of a Tahitian village has been built on the dock alongside the ship. A longboat on display is a replica of the one in which Captain Bligh and a few loyal crew members were set adrift.

Among St. Petersburg's cultural attractions, the Museum of Fine Arts is outstanding. It has a display of Oriental works of art as well as a fine collection of traditional art, sculptures, tapestries and antique furniture. Three rooms panelled in French, Georgian and Jacobean styles are of particular interest.

The early history of Florida is described in the

St. Petersburg Historical Museum which has a vast collection of items donated by local residents.

The Grace S. Turner House is an old home, open to the public, that displays many antiques.

The Haas Museum has a refurbished oldtime barber shop, dentist's office and blacksmith's forge but its most interesting exhibit is an eagle's nest that has been set up in the museum just as it was in the wild.

More than 5,000 varieties of plants are displayed in the St. Petersburg Sunken Gardens, including orchids, azaleas, camellias, hibiscus, bougainvillea, and many other brilliantly coloured tropical flowers. Walk through aviaries house flamingoes,

macaws, toucans, peacocks and parrots and are enlivened by the chatter of mynah birds.

Fort Desoto Park south of St. Petersburg includes six islands, called keys, and has more than three miles of safe swimming beaches and numerous fishing piers.

The earth and masonry fort which is the focal point of the park was built during the Spanish American War but never saw any action. It is unusual in that it is mostly below ground. Six 12-inch mortars inside the fort were mounted so that they could be fired by remote control at targets which crews loading the guns could not see. The projectiles were fired at a high angle and travelled in an arc to descend vertically onto their targets.

St. Petersburg is a fine centre for touring the Gulf Coast of Florida. Head northward and you can visit Clearwater, which has a superb beach, and Tarpon Springs, formerly the base of a sponge fishing industry operated by Greek immigrants. It has many reminders of that era.

Go east to Tampa to visit Busch Gardens which is one of the finest zoological gardens in the U.S. You can tour the gardens aboard an overhead monorail train that gives views like those from a helicopter flying over the African veldt.

Sarasota, which for several decades was the winter home of the Ringling circus, is a short drive south from St. Petersburg. It has a wide range of attractions, several being legacies left by the Ringling family.

Ca' d'Zan, a Venetian-Gothic palace in which John and Mable Ringling lived, was inspired by the Doge's Palace in Venice.

The Ringling Museum of Art is an authentic reproduction of an Italian villa that is one of the most beautiful examples of Italian Renaissance architecture in North America. The Ringlings collected fragments of many old European buildings before export of such items was forbidden. The villa incorporates columns, doorways and many sculptures they had acquired.

The art collection includes paintings by Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, Rembrandt, Hals, Van Dyke, El Greco and Velazquez. The collection of paintings by Rubens is one of the finest in existence.

The Ringling Museum of the Circus, and the Circus Hall of Fame, recall the days when the travelling circus was in its heyday. They trace the history of the circus from its origins in Greece and Rome through to the 1930s.



Maurice Dixon

## New agency opens

Travelling can be a complicated business and the owner of Georgetown's new Aatco Travel Service hopes his agency can help make things a little simpler.

Maurice Dixon, owner of the new agency, is a past master at travel, having travelled extensively during the past 15 years in connection with his work for various multi-national

The company handles all aspects of travel, he added. "We're in touch with the larger wholesalers for tours and so on, and we think we can give people a good choice range," Mr. Dixon said.

The agency will also provide travel counselling for those who aren't sure where they want to go.

"I think a lot of people would like to sell a client the most expensive trip available," Mr. Dixon said. "We'd hope to sell them the trip that fits their needs, no matter what the price is."

"We want to concentrate on commercial enterprises as well as individual customers, because they do a lot of travelling and they don't always get the kind of service they should," Mr. Dixon said.

The store, located on Main Street South in Georgetown in the former location of Bettlaine's, will be open Monday through Saturday and Mr. Dixon said, and "professionally available any time for an appointment."

The word Aatco stands for All About Travel Company, Mr. Dixon said, and "professionally available any time for an appointment."

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## New travel guide for handicaps

People who are physically disabled have traditionally had a difficult time of it when they have had to travel.

So many barriers had to be overcome that travel was avoided unless absolutely necessary, and a pleasure trip was fraught with so many worries that the pleasure was all but gone.

At long last, things are changing, and none too soon, as some 20 million Americans can testify.

At last, the various facets of the travel industry are undergoing a transformation, and are beginning to make provisions for the disabled.

Many hotels and motels in the U.S. now provide rooms that are easily accessible by wheelchair, with bathroom facilities that are suitably modified.

Most of the major carriers have made great strides forward and have made special arrangements or provide special facilities for those passengers with limited physical mobility.

A book has recently been published which describes in detail what facilities are available in the U.S. (and, to a lesser degree, abroad), and which advises handicapped travelers how to proceed in planning and carrying out their vacations easily and enjoyably.

This book, which is a veritable treasure trove of information, is called, most appropriately, *TravelAbility* (Macmillan, \$9.95), and its author, Lois Reamy, who has thoroughly researched her subject, overflows with truly good advice.

She discusses the various modes of transportation — tells what it's like to travel on each, and the special arrangements that have been made and are available for the asking.

The question of package tours is probed, and the pros and cons of ordinary tours as opposed to those specifically designed to meet the needs of the disabled are thoroughly gone into.

So is the choice of a travel agent: how to go about deciding on one, and what he or she can be expected to do.

There is an in-depth discussion of the great outdoors, previously off-limits for the most part, and what is being done to make it accessible to the disabled.

The true stars of the book are the handful of handicapped people who, in the process of traveling, posed for the many pictures in it — to show what travel in a wheelchair is like and, most,

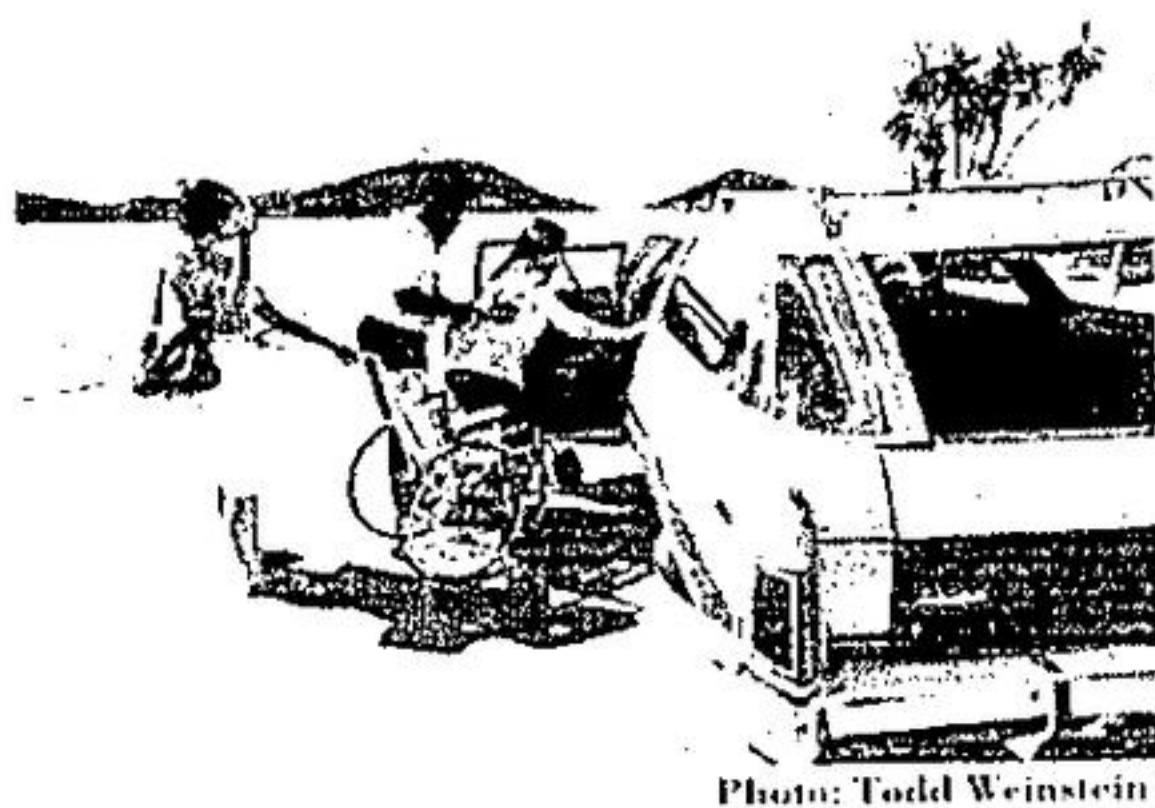


Photo: Todd Weinstein

THE WORLD IS ACCESSIBLE to many thousands of physically disabled people, thanks to improvements in facilities and their own courage and determination. Here, sightseeing commences on the scenic cruise of St. Thomas for one passenger on a luxurious cruise of the Caribbean. A wide range of invaluable advice is available to physically handicapped travelers in a new book, *TravelAbility*, written by veteran travel writer, Lois Reamy, and published by Macmillan.

importantly, that it can be done.

To quote Dr. Arthur Abramson, who wrote the introduction to the book:

"I have been to every part of the Western Hemisphere from Alaska to Chile, from

Nova Scotia to Brazil. In addition, I have been to every part of the world except Africa and intend to go there next year.

"I have traveled by train, by ship, by automobile, and

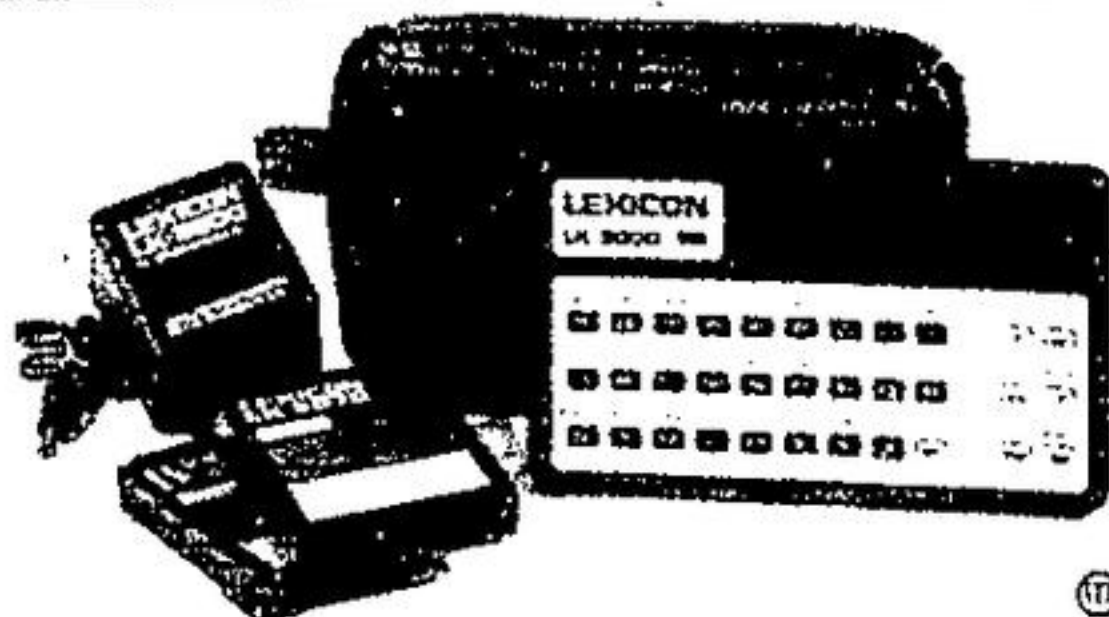
by airplane. It was all done without walking a single step. "It was fulfilling and, as a rule, not difficult.

"However, I would be less than candid if I said that the process was entirely free of problems. An uneventful life eventually must become dull for anyone.

"Traveling is never dull and always eventful. It is especially eventful for the disabled and a constant challenge to their problem-solving abilities, without which the disabled can never feel whole."

Dr. Abramson has made the world his oyster and he urges readers of the book to follow his example to experience the many things the world has to offer, something which they may have been afraid of doing for any number of reasons.

There is a whole world waiting out there, and this book may well be the key that opens it up, at long last, to that large segment of our population, the physically disabled.



**FOREIGN PHRASES MADE EASY!** A major breakthrough in computer technology, Lexicon Corporation's LK-3000, is a hand-held language conversion computer. The unit and its attendant modules can translate English into German, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese and vice versa.

## Hand-held computer aids communication

Have you ever been in a foreign country, wandering aimlessly trying to find a good place to eat, dictionary in hand?

Have you wondered why, in this day and age, someone can't invent a way to make language conversion easier?

Well, the time has come. Lexicon Corporation, a Miami-based electronics firm, has introduced the first hand-held computer designed to translate foreign languages.

The LK-3000 operates

with pre-programmed modules that will translate English into Spanish, French, Italian, German and Portuguese and vice versa. It is available at major department stores across the country.

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