



## Presents: “Pioneers in the Subtropics”

In the southernmost reaches of the Florida peninsula, just before the coral rock islands of the Florida Keys make their break for open multi-hued seas, you will find a unique locale. At once tropical and rural, it is the growing region of Homestead, Redland and Florida City. The people who settled this region were pioneers in the subtropics. Today we will tell their stories through a series of fascinating visits.



Our first visit takes us to the Coral Castle, an unusual collection of massive coral rock sculptures including mammoth tables, gates and astronomical figures. Edward Leedskalnin was a tiny Latvian émigré whose spurned love drove him to create this “castle.” He quarried, sculpted and transported his limestone figures without assistance, even though they weighed many tons. Because he always worked at night, his methods were never discovered. Leedskalnin boasted that he had discovered the secret of the pyramids.



As we head to our next stop, we are traveling through historic Homestead and Redland area architecture, making sure not to miss the unique pioneer agricultural-inspired style. This style includes cracker cottages, old packinghouses, railroad buildings, churches and school houses. And the area still retains the rural flavor that has made it home to generations of farming families.

Next, we are off to R.F. Orchids, a third generation orchid-growing family whose highly respected operation is one of the best in the South. Here you find thousands of exotic orchids growing in a hammock-like setting accented with gazebos, ponds, tiki huts and lush landscaping. The orchids are everywhere, but the entrance boasts many of the finest specimens.

LOCATED IN THE HISTORIC CORAL GABLES BILTMORE HOTEL  
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The nursery consistently wins awards for outstanding work in orchid breeding and growing. When you browse through the greenhouses, it's easy to see why.

We then experience the novelty of a local winery and brewery. Explore the sensual palette-teasing flavors of South Florida's pioneering vineyard, Schnebly Redland's Winery & Brewery. Forget what you think you know about craft beers and fruit wine as you permit your taste buds to collide with familiar but slightly exotic offerings. With such beer specialties named Big Rod Coconut Ale or Gator Tail Brown Ale and wines such as Category 3 Hurricane, Lychee Dolce, Mango Dolce, Carambola, Sparkling Passion, and Denisse's Boo Boo, this is an exciting foray into one of Southern Florida's growing phenomena, the popular expansion of beer and wine offerings outside the traditional realm.

Our next stop lies at the edge of the Everglades is a remote, old-fashioned, roadside fruit stand, entertainment venue and watering hole – “Robert is Here.” This storied place is a popular Everglades family destination. Locals order at the counter, pick up their hand-made milkshakes and shop amidst the hustle and bustle and the huge variety of local fruit and vegetables on location.



Finally, South Florida has a tour that rivals those of the wine region of Northern California and the quaint villages of New England. Be sure you don't miss it!

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