



James St Laurent's Miami / 4  
Vizcaya museum and gardens

## Description

# A photo journal of Miami's most intriguing neighbourhoods and sites

Text and images by **James St Laurent**

Drive across the MacArthur Causeway from Miami Beach into Coconut Grove and you will find Vizcaya, neatly hidden on Biscayne Bay.



The **Vizcaya Museum and Gardens**, previously known as Villa Vizcaya, is the former villa and estate of businessman **James Deering** of the Deering McCormick-International Harvester fortune. Deering lived on the estate from 1916 until his death in 1925.

The 34-room Baroque mansion, completed in 1916, consists of a variety of distinctive themed rooms featuring architectural interiors embellished with many antiques, and emphasizing 15th-century European decorative art and furnishings. at the beginning of the 19th century.

The villa is surrounded by 10 acres of serene and expansive Italian Renaissance gardens filled with fountains and statues, some of which date back to antiquity. The formal gardens are surrounded by 40 acres of the native 'hammock' (jungle forest).

The most remarkable feature of the European-inspired estate is the ornamental breakwater that sits right in the bay. Carved out of Florida limestone in the shape of an oversize Venetian barge with several decorative sculptures, it makes for one of the most sublime photo ops in Miami.

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Vizcaya was the venue where President Ronald Reagan received Pope John Paul II on his first visit to Miami in 1987. It hosted the 1994 First Summit of the Americas convened by President Bill Clinton. It has provided the

setting for many films, both credited and un-credited. Exterior sequences filmed at Vizcaya can be seen in the films *Ventura: Pet Detective*, *Any Given Sunday*, *Bad Boys Tony Rome*, *Ace II*, *The Money Pit*, and *Iron Man 3*.



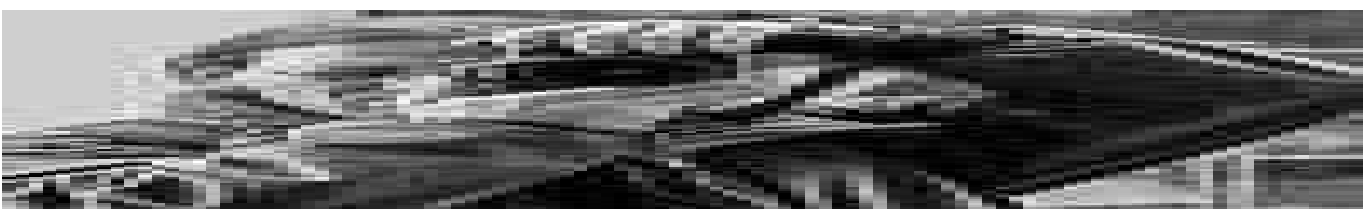
Vizcaya, built with an open-air courtyard and extensive gardens, has been subject to environmental and hurricane damage, the latter notably in 1926, 1992, and 2005, as well the most recent, Hurricane Irma of 2017.

Vizcaya is now a National Historic Landmark and considered a must-see museum in Miami.

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**James St Laurent** – *My work is all about the idea – to communicate through images that convey an emotive context and engage the viewer by presenting a visual paradox. Different types of subjects and genres require different approaches, but the end result is still a compelling image that captures your attention. Despite having had a camera early on, I found myself in a career as a stage set and lighting designer, then accidentally stumbled and fell back into photography. Since then I have shot a variety of genres, ranging from fashion to travel to portraits to concerts, and exhibited in galleries in both group and solo shows. There are photographs everywhere – the problem is to find the interesting images or those that no one else sees. The obvious is easy– the unique takes a little more time.*



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1. Image Gallery
2. Photography
3. Travel

### Tags

1. James St-Laurent
2. Miami
3. travel
4. Vizcaya museum and gardens

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