

There are a lot of reasons that folks don't do any or all of the ILCA Southern Circuit but one thing, I believe, puts pause in a team's plans to race the circuit is the unknown. Where do I stay? How do I get to the club? Where do I park? Where do I eat? Can I buy a drink at the yacht club with cash? I am a compulsive planner. I research airline tickets, hotels and other items associated with major regatta or vacation planning. My wife says I am a procrastinator ("Just buy the tickets. The price isn't going to change!"). I think I am a skillful vacation/regatta resource machine. Regardless, here are my updated tips for you for the 2010 Southern Circuit (by venue).

General tips:

Lodging: None of the yacht clubs has a deep active fleet base and, as such, member housing at venues is hard to come by. Camping is not allowed at any of the clubs either but there are campgrounds in the area of all venues (within 5-10 miles). Your best bet is to book a hotel early and keep an eye out for deals. Details on each venue are listed below. Also, using Priceline.com or Hotwire.com can get you great deals but beware, as Priceline only guarantees 1 bed per room and once you "win" your "bid" on these sites the room is yours' with no cancellations. Use a website like www.betterbidding.com to help you navigate what hotel you may be getting.

Yacht club privileges: Each club has a great bar and restaurant. However none take cash. Each club offers the option of obtaining a "courtesy card" which you use to purchase food and beverage. Details on each are below.



Savannah **March 13-14**
www.savannahyachtclub.org
(912) 897-1314

How to get there:

Directions at: <https://savannahyachtclub.memberstatements.com/login/login.cfm?clubid=12872>

Map at:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?q=savannah+yacht+club&hl=en&cd=1&ei=ttJES6TZKo60yQTqouzsCQ&ie=UTF8&view=map&cid=3972940458645973451&iwloc=A&ved=0CBcQpQY&sa=X>

(The yacht club is actually another ¼ mile down the road from the "A" on the map. Follow Bradley Point Rd. to the end).

YC rules: A guest card can be secured at the front desk or at registration. You will need a MasterCard or Visa and the club will bill your charges to that card. Parking is plentiful and the staff is exceptional (look for a ticket on your windshield that tells you your windshield has been cleaned by the staff!!). Jan Mock runs the front desk and Tony has been the bartender there forever (He knows what I drink!). Club is open for lunch and dinner Thursday-Saturday.

Event details: Event offers coffee and doughnuts on Saturday and Sunday. Box lunches can be purchased for both days at registration. Dinner for 3 is provided on Saturday with entry. This also usually includes an Oyster Roast.

Lodging: It is St. Patrick's Day weekend. Savannah has the 2nd largest St. Patrick's Day celebration in the country (so I'm told) and hotels fill up fast so booking hotel rooms early will get you the best deals. There are no hotels less than 10-15 minutes away from the club. Midtown seems to have best deals and is about 15-20 minutes from the club. There are a lot of hotels in that area. We used to stay at a Holiday Inn there but it has changed brands and I believe it is Quality Inn now. There is a Fairfield Inn as well as a few "suites" hotels. The LaQuinta has decent reviews on

tripadvisor and was showing rooms for \$60 with 2 beds when I checked today (Jan 6th). For those who want to be in the action of downtown there are several hotels to choose from in the \$140-200 range. Most are nice (some are not) but downtown offers you walking access to historic Savannah. There are Residence Inn type hotels out by the mall which may offer a better value if you have a large team and need more room.

Veteran tip: Get into town Thursday. Play a round of golf near the Air Force base and enjoy downtown on Thurs night. Then work on your boat and socialize Friday. Have a nice dinner Friday night. First race isn't until 1pm on Saturday.

+++ tip: It is gnat season in Savannah. Bring your best bug repellent or buy whatever the club is selling.

Savannah to Miami: 495.79 miles. About 8-9 hours of driving depending on traffic, etc.

3 options:

- Leave Savannah ASAP and hoof it all the way to Miami.
- Leave Savannah at a leisurely pace. Drive 6-7 hours. Secure hotels an hour or 2 North of Miami. Drive in after morning rush.
- Enjoy Savannah Sunday evening and drive down on Monday.

We usually do option 2 but may try option 1 this year.



Miami **March 16-17**
<http://www.coralreefyachtclub.org>
(305)-858-1733

How to get there: <http://www.mapquest.com/maps?1c=Savannah&1s=GA&1a=%5B745-799%5D+Bradley+Point+Rd&1z=31410&1y=US&1l=32.019714&1g=-81.016185&1v=BLOCK&2qn=coral+reef+yacht+club>

YC rules: A guest card can be secured at the front desk. You will need a MasterCard or Visa and the club will bill your charges to that card. Parking is tight. There are a finite number of guest spots "inside" the club gates. Parking is available at the USSailing Center next door and on the grass strip outside the gate on Bayshore Blvd. Although good advice everywhere it is important to secure your valuables when parked outside the club gates (or anywhere for that matter). The club is "closed" on Monday but access to the facilities, hoist, parking lot, etc. is available. Club bar is open Tuesday and Weds.

Event details: The Coral Reef Yacht Club, I think, offers a lot of bang for the buck! Registration is Monday afternoon where a tub full of cold drinks is available. Tuesday morning there is a full buffet breakfast with scrambled eggs, potatoes, toast, juice, coffee, etc. Tuesday dinner is included for 3 and is usually a great pasta buffet on the deck by the pool. On Wednesday the club presents a "getaway" Mexican style buffet before awards. The only meals not covered are Tuesday lunch and Wednesday breakfast (although they do have coffee and doughnuts at CRYC on Weds).

Lodging: There are a few popular choices. The Doubletree is now a Courtyard Marriott and it is the closest hotel to the club (walking distance). Rates are usually around \$180+. The Hampton Inn is close as well and rates are usually in the \$140 range. The Residence Inn Coconut Grove is close and offers 2BR accommodations. It is another option

for a big group or 2 teams that get along real well. There are less expensive alternatives in Coral Gables are but check tripadvisor.com for reviews before booking. Hotwire usually will have decent deals on Coconut Grove hotels but you need to do the research before you hit "buy". I have stayed in downtown Miami, which is a 20-30 minute drive at nice hotels for a decent price as well. Best bet is to book the Hampton Inn and cancel if a better deal comes along.

Veteran tip: Get into "The Grove" for dinner Monday night and people watch. Put your boat in the water early on race days and paddle it out to a finger dock and then sit and enjoy breakfast on the pool deck to avoid the stress of waiting in a very tight lineup for the hoist. Monty's is next to the club and a great place to have lunch on Monday before an afternoon sail or sightseeing trip.

+++ tip: There is a lot of rigging, unrigging, sailing, racing, socializing, etc. all packed into what is, essentially, 48 hours in Miami. Pace yourself, drink lots' of water, use sunscreen and find time to relax.

Miami to St. Pete: 269.41 miles. As little as 4 hours and as much as 6 hours of driving depending on traffic, etc. 3 options:

- Leave Miami ASAP and drive straight to St. Pete on Weds.
- Leave Miami at a leisurely pace. Stop somewhere near Sarasota or Punta Gorda and drive into St. Pete on Thursday.
- Enjoy Miami Sunday evening and drive across Thursday morning.

We always do option 1 and get to the SPYC bar for a late dinner or, at least, last call. It's nice to get settled in for 4 nights in one place after all the driving.



St. Pete

March 19-21

www.spyc.org

727.822.3873

How to get there:

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps?1pn=Coral+Reef+Yacht+Club&1c=Miami&1s=FL&1a=2484+S+Bayshore+Dr&1z=3133&1y=US&1l=25.733764&1g=-80.231691&1v=ADDRESS&1id=4356011&2pn=St+Petersburg+Yacht+Club&2c=St+Petersburg&2s=FL&2a=11+Central+Ave&2z=33701&2y=US&2l=27.771245&2g=-82.632418&2v=ADDRESS&2id=22320814#b/maps/l:Coral+Reef+Yacht+Club:2484+S+Bayshore+Dr:Miami:FL:33133:US:25.733764:-80.231691:address::1:::4356011/l:St+Petersburg+Yacht+Club:11+Central+Ave:St+Petersburg:FL:33701:US:27.771245:-82.632418:address::1:::22320814/io:1:::f:::/e>

YC rules: Like the other 2 clubs a guest card can be secured at the front desk or at registration. You will need a MasterCard or Visa and the club will bill your charges to that card. The yacht club is downtown and, as such, parking is tight. The club will have parking guidelines that will point out where you can park legally. It may be worth it to pay

the parking fee at the parking lot near the ballpark or you can park for free in allotted slots on Demens' Landing, the peninsula where the sailing center is located. SPYC has several dining options and an excellent bar which serves very good bar fare.

Event details: SPYC provides a lot of great services and functions for the class. After the skippers meeting and ILCA winter meeting a welcome party is thrown with appetizers and cash bar. On Saturday night a banquet is held in the ballroom where ILCA awards are handed out. This is a very nice event. Dress is yacht club casual and folks clothing choices ranges from coat and tie and cocktail wear to far more "casual". It's the only "dress up" night of the circuit so my team usually pulls out our best "yacht club" attire. As St. Pete is the longest event there is usually more time to relax. As the SPYC is downtown you can walk to everything. Movies, the Pier, Dali and Holocaust museums, great food, etc. are all minutes away by foot. Busch Gardens' is in Tampa and is about a 45 minute drive.

Lodging: The closest hotel is Hampton Inn downtown (the one on 1st and Beach). They sometimes fill up and the rates are near \$180+/night. The Hilton is also very nice and also walking distance. Look to pay as around \$180 but it can be lower. Best downtown bargain hotel is The Ponce de Leon. Rates today were \$79-89 for a single bed room and \$120 for a room with 2 beds. The Ponce is old St. Pete. It is "classic" but clean and close and very popular with sailors. The Ponce is a boutique hotel. Also downtown is the Vinoy, a Courtyard by Marriott and a new Indigo Hotel. All on the upper price scale but worth looking into if you are living it up.

Other options include condo rentals on or near the beach or hotels up near Ulmerton Rd. and hotels off 275 on the way to Tampa. These options can be cheaper but driving times can be 10-30 minutes. Typically, the Ramada Inn and Candlewoods Suites type hotels are in the \$70-80/night range up near Ulmerton Rd. but count on a 20-30 minute drive.

Veteran tip: Don't miss the ILCA winter meeting on Thursday afternoon after the skippers meeting. Sailing starts earlier in St. Pete than at Savannah or Miami. Plan on leaving the dock early enough. If it's light air it can be a long sail out to the sailing area on Tampa Bay. Leave when the group leaves. Don't miss having a drink by the pool at the Tiki Bar.

+++ tip: Pace yourself. There can be a lot of sitting around at St. Pete. Be flexible. Walk the Pier. Watch the NCAA games in the bar. Racing will happen when it can. Manage your downtime well by relaxing and socializing and the event will be a huge success for you and your team.

Final thoughts: If you have any questions feel free to email or call me (president@lightningclass.org) or Southern Circuit VP Laura Jeffers (ljeffers11@verizon.net). We'll try to steer you on the right path.

So get organized, make some reservations, pop in a CD, grab a coffee and head to the southeast for some great winter Lightning sailing. Hope to see and meet some new faces on the circuit this year.