



st.petersburg NEWS

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ST. PETERSBURG RANKS NUMBER ONE ON LIST OF TOP U.S. 25 ARTS DESTINATIONS – FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

ST. PETERSBURG, FL (May 17, 2011) – Members and friends of St. Petersburg's arts community have spoken again, catapulting the city to the top spot on *AmericanStyle* Magazine's list of Top 25 Arts Destinations for mid-sized U.S. cities for the second year in a row. This is the tenth straight year St. Petersburg has been recognized for its vibrant arts community and the second year it's finished in the top 10.

The significance of this ranking continues to grow as arts offerings in St. Petersburg have recently expanded – with the Dale Chihuly Collection on Beach Drive surpassing 100,000 visitors less than one year after its grand opening; the Morean Arts Center Hot Shop opening in July 2010; and the stunning new home of the Salvador Dali Museum, which opened to much international, royal fanfare in January 2011.

In the ranking, St. Petersburg topped the list ahead of cities including Savannah, New Orleans, Charleston, Tampa, Boulder, Miami, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Honolulu and others.

Six world-class museums, including the Museum of Fine Arts and the Dali, already call St. Petersburg home. The city also boasts internationally-acclaimed music and theater at the Progress Energy Center for the Arts/Mahaffey Theater, as well as in more intimate venues, such as The Palladium Theater, American Stage and the new home of freeFall Theatre Company. The Progress Energy Center for the Arts/Mahaffey Theater is also home to The Florida Orchestra since 1966. And St. Petersburg's downtown gallery district provides exhibition space for a diverse range of local and regional art exhibits. The recent revival of the classic Crislip Arcade, 645 Central Ave., into studio and gallery space for emerging artists further underscores the city's commitment to its arts community. City Council Member and gallery owner Leslie Curran spearheaded the Crislip renovation.

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Top Arts Destination continued...

Elizabeth Brincklow, the city's Arts and International Relations Manager, is pleased with the ranking for many reasons. It recognizes the work of many individuals and organizations such as the City's Arts Advisory Committee, Public Art Commission, the St. Pete Arts initiative, the Downtown Arts Association and the St. Petersburg Artist Resource Collaborative. The recognition also reinforces the many programs managed by the city. Among them, the Mahaffey Theater art gallery which gives local and regional artists and art groups an opportunity to display their work in a high profile arts venue; and the Mahaffey Theater's notable Class Acts program which provides arts education to students through in-school artist residency programs, master classes and field trips to curriculum-based stage productions.

Results of the AmericanStyle survey will help further strengthen St. Petersburg's arts reputation locally as well as increase its national and international opportunities for tourism dollars.

This is the 14th year for the AmericanStyle Magazine annual poll, which allows readers to vote on the cities they believe fit the criteria for a Top 25 Arts Destination based on a city's population. AmericanStyle Magazine is the nation's premier arts magazine for art, collectors, and cultural travelers, featuring information about American contemporary art and artists, galleries, travel and tourism.

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