



'Dr. Beach' Names Caladesi Island #1 in America

Pristine St. Pete/Clearwater 'Getaway' Tops 2008 List

HAWAII, CALIFORNIA OUTRANKED BY 'SECRET' FLORIDA FAVORITE

St. Pete/Clearwater, FL (May 22, 2008) – Coastal expert Dr. Stephen Leatherman, a.k.a. “Dr. Beach,” has named Caladesi Island State Park in the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area America’s Top Beach for 2008.

Leatherman unveiled his internationally-recognized list of the Top 10 U.S. Beaches live via satellite from Caladesi Island State Park this morning.

Labeling it his “favorite getaway beach,” Leatherman lauded the pristine barrier island’s “powder white” sand and “warm, crystal-clear” water in bestowing it the number one spot, nudging it into first place from the #2 ranking it received in both 2006 and 2007.

Situated two miles out in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Dunedin, the 3-mile long island, which is dotted with palm trees and protected by mangrove stands on its bay side, is accessible only by boat or the Caladesi

Connection ferry. There are no paved roads or vehicles, but amenities like beach cabana rentals, an onsite café and a marina with full electric and water hookups make this “well-kept secret” a “great place to decompress,” according to Leatherman.



“To have Dr. Beach name Caladesi Island America’s best beach is a tremendous honor,” said DT Minich, executive director of Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater. “Especially since this is the second time one of our beaches has made it to number one on his list.”

In 2005, Ft. De Soto Park’s North Beach was also awarded Leatherman’s top honor which, together with today’s announcement, distinguishes the St.Pete/Clearwater area as the only Florida destination ever to have two beaches make it to the top of his list.

“This distinction is especially flattering because it confirms what our many visitors have been saying for a long time,” said Commissioner Robert Stewart, Chairman of Pinellas County Board

of Commissioners. “Namely, that Pinellas County is home to some of the finest beaches anywhere in the world.”

Other Florida beaches honored this year include third-ranked Siesta Key, near Sarasota, and ninth-ranked Cape Florida State Park in Key Biscayne, near Miami. Beaches in Hawaii, California, North Carolina and Long Island, New York round out the top ten.

Leatherman, who is the director of Florida International University’s Laboratory for Coastal Research, is one of the world’s leading authorities on coastal sciences, having authored or edited more than 16 books and written hundreds of journal articles on the subject. He has made a Memorial Day Weekend tradition of unveiling his annual list of America’s finest strands of sand and surf.

Hi-resolution images of Caladesi Island for editorial use available at <http://www.cleanpix.com/cleanpix/portal/WGdZ:wz1:Z2A>

Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater is the official destination marketing organization for Pinellas County.

*For more information: www.FloridasBeach.com
Contact: PR Director David Downing: David@Floridasbeach.com
Phone: 727.464.7213*

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