



NEW FLIGHTS, STADIUMS AND SAME OLD SUNSHINE **FOR SPRING TRAINING SEASON IN FLORIDA**

ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER (February 2004) — Pitchers and catchers have already reported, now it is time for fans to come down for the annual ritual known as Spring Training. Baseball season is closer than you think (and cheaper) thanks to new low-cost air service from USA3000 and the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area – also known as Spring Training Central.

The Philadelphia Phillies open a brand-new \$34 million, 7,000-seat spring training stadium in Clearwater this year with triple the parking of the old stadium. Bright House Networks Field features a classic Florida architectural style with a 360-degree main concourse, open to the playing field, grass berm seating in the outfield, children's play area and tiki-hut pavilion in the outfield. (www.philadelphiaPhillies.com)

USA 3000 is offering special, low introductory fares from Philadelphia International Airport starting at \$59 each way for the new service to St. Petersburg/Clearwater. The airline flies three times a week on an A320 aircraft. USA 3000 is a two-year-old carrier with flights that operate from several northern cities to warm weather destinations. USA3000 Airlines works closely with Apple Vacations, one of the largest tour operators in the United States. The airline saves passengers time by flying into St. Petersburg/Clearwater International airport directly on the beaches rather than landing at Tampa International Airport. (www.usa3000.com) Several scheduled service and charter airlines serve the area through the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport (www.fly2pie.com) and Tampa International. (www.tampaairport.com)

St. Petersburg/Clearwater is the capital of Spring Training's Florida "Grapefruit League." Within a one-hour drive, there are seven teams and dozens of spring training games to be watched. The West Coast of Florida serves as a temporary home to several major league baseball teams during their training season. Teams such as the Phillies (Clearwater), Toronto Blue Jays (Dunedin – just north of Clearwater), Tampa Bay Devil Rays (St. Petersburg), Detroit Tigers (Lakeland), Pittsburgh Pirates (Bradenton), New York Yankees (Tampa), and the Cincinnati Reds (Sarasota) all combine for one incredible baseball extravaganza. (<http://springtraining.tbo.com/>)

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Bright House Networks Field in Clearwater replaces Jack Russell Memorial Stadium which was the spring home to the Phillies for nearly 50 years. This season is also special for the Toronto Blue Jays because it will be their second season played in their newly renovated complex in Dunedin – just north of Clearwater. Last year, the area spent \$12 million on a new spring training facility for the Blue Jays, which included a new training center, offices, hitting cages, and five full fields at the Cecil P. Englebert Recreational Complex. In St. Petersburg, the Tampa Bay Devil Rays play in one of the most scenic spring training locales at Progress Energy Park. Sit in on the first base side and you can watch sailboats in cruise Tampa Bay while you enjoy the ballgame.

(www threshersbaseball.com) (www.stpete.org/allang.htm)

St. Petersburg/Clearwater is an incredible area for Spring Training, and it is the most popular visitor destination on the Gulf Coast of Florida. The area is best known for record-breaking sunshine and 35 miles of spectacular beaches, three of which are rated among the best in the United States. It also features a variety of attractions, world-class museums, sporting activities and nature-related experiences. This year, St. Petersburg's Salvador Dali Museum celebrates the 100th anniversary of Dali's birth with an all-new exhibit (www.salvadordalimuseum.org) (www.floridasbeach.com)

For more information on the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area, call 1-877-FL-BEACH (352-3224) or visit FloridasBeach.com.

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High-res photos of the area and airline are available at www.Floridasbeach.com/mediakit or by e-mail from wit@FloridasBeach.com

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*You are receiving this press release because we believe you would be interested in tourism news from the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area on Florida's Gulf Coast.
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