Saturday, February 6: Cienfuegos. Morning flight from Miami to Cienfuegos.

Upon arrival explore Cienfuegos which was founded by French settlers in 1819. Its historic center was declared a World Cultural Heritage site in 2005 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). As a whole, this area has retained its historic fabric and was recognized by UNESCO as an important interchange of influences based on the Spanish Enlightenment, and represents an outstanding early example of their implementation in urban planning in Latin America in the 19th century. Its superb architectural ensemble reflects the new ideas of modernity, hygiene and order in urban planning in the early 1800’s.

Enjoy a walking tour of the historic area around the Parque Marti, the central square. Admire the lavish Cathedral and the town theater which was built with materials and craftspeople imported from Europe. Stop in at the Tomas Terry Theater (assuming renovation has been finished) built between 1887 and 1889 by the son of Venezuelan industrialist Tomas Terry. The theater opened with a performance of Verdi’s Aida. The inside is magnificent with seats made from Cuban hardwoods and an impressive ceiling fresco.

After lunch at Jardin de los Laureles drive to the Taller Grafico cooperative of young Cuban artists who can be found working on their lithographs over stone matrices in the large, airy building. The variety of colors, sizes, and content of the prints are wide and include pieces with recognizable Cuban icons, bold black and white woodcuts.

Stop at the Museo Historico Provincial to attend a performance of Cantores de Cienfuegos, a versatile, 23-member choral group. Under the direction of Honey Moreira Abreu, who became their conductor originally as part of Cuba's required community service and loved it so much that she stayed on. The choir has an eclectic repertoire, singing everything from Renaissance to Japanese fisherman's folk music.

Enjoy an introductory lecture followed by drinks and a welcome dinner at the hotel this evening. Hotel La Union. L,D.

Sunday, February 7: Cienfuegos. Depart for a full day excursion to Trinidad. Trinidad is the fourth of the seven cities founded by Diego de Velasquez in 1514 who used it as a base for expeditions into the “New World.” Today it is maintained as a living museum, just as the Spaniards left it in its period of greatest opulence. It is the crown jewel of Cuba’s colonial cities. The whole city with its fine palaces, cobbled streets and tiled roofs is a national monument, and since 1988, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Begin the day at the Plaza Mayor which is in the center of town and elegantly adorned with glazed earthenware urns. Around the plaza are the Museo Romantico, the Museo Arqueologia and the cathedral, Iglesia Parroquial de la Santisima Trinidad which was built between 1817 and 1892. Explore the cathedral, which is the largest church in Cuba, and is renowned for its acoustics. On the left at the front of the church is a crucifix of the brown-skinned Christ of Veracruz who is the patron of Trinidad. The altars are made of precious woods such as cedar, acacia, caoba and grenadine.

Visit the Palacio Cantero which is housed in a mansion that belonged to the Borrell family from 1827 to 1830. Later the building passed to a German planter named Kanter or Cantero, and it is still called Casa
Cantero. Dr. Justo Cantero acquired vast sugar estates and his wealth is well displayed in the stylish neoclassical decoration of the rooms. The view of Trinidad from the top of the tower is wonderful and not to be missed.

Stop in at the home and studio of artist Carlos Mata and his wife, Barbara Calzada and daughter, Amaya Mata, who are also artists. It will be possible to purchase art here.

Enjoy lunch just off the Plaza Mayor at a new private restaurant called Sol Ananda. Owner, **Lazaro Orellana** has taken advantage of the relaxed regulations regarding private enterprise in Cuba and has opened a restaurant with seating capacity for 50 diners. He is employing and paying several Cubans who are not family members to assist him in running this restaurant. Group members will have an opportunity to engage with the staff.

After lunch, stop in at Trinidad’s Library where the group will learn more about the important role of libraries in Cuba. Meeting with staff at the library, the discussion will focus on the subject of intellectual freedom, a passionately debated issue. Participants will learn more about how books are selected and what censorship occurs. The discussion will also focus on how Havana exerts control in more rural areas. We recommend that you bring a copy of your favorite novel to donate to the museum!

Drive a short distance to explore the area known as the Valle de Los Ingenios. This is the sugar industry’s living museum, featuring 75 ruined sugar mills, summer mansions, barracks, and other related facilities. Here we will find the famous 45 meter tall Manaca-Iznaga Tower whose bells once marked the beginning and end of work hours on the sugar plantations.

End the afternoon at the home of **Julio and Rosa Munoz**. Their beautiful home is a traditional Trinidad house and we will get a chance to chat with the family – Julio is a horse whisperer and will have one of his horses for the group to meet. End the meeting with an introductory salsa lesson led by Renier Toscano. Bring those dancing shoes!

Enjoy a dinner at another paladar called Tranvia. **B,L,D**.

**Monday, February 8: Havana.** Drive to Havana stopping at the Bay of Pigs en route. Here, in 1962, about 1,300 heavily armed CIA-trained Cuban exiles came ashore fully equipped to provoke a counter-revolution to topple the Castro regime.

Arrive in Havana about 1.00pm and enjoy lunch at the historic Nacional Hotel for lunch. The Hotel Nacional de Cuba is a historic luxury hotel located on the Malecón in Havana, Cuba. It was designed by the famous New York firm McKim, Mead and White and features an eclectic mix of architectural styles. It opened in 1930 when Cuba was a prime travel destination for Americans, long before the embargo. In1955, Meyer Lansky managed to persuade Batista to give him a piece of the Nacional. That same year Pan Am’s Intercontinental Hotels Corporation took over management of the hotel. Lansky planned to take a wing of the 10-story hotel and create luxury suites for high stakes players. Batista endorsed Lansky’s idea even though there were objections from American expatriates like Ernest Hemingway. Under Lansky's impetus, a wing of the grand entrance hall was refurbished to include a bar, a restaurant, a showroom and a luxurious casino. It was operated by Lansky and his brother Jake, with Wilbur Clark as the front man.

Drive to the **Parque Central Hotel**, located on the edge of Old Havana, for check-in. Of all the capital cities in the Caribbean, Havana has the reputation of being the most splendid and the finest example of a Spanish colonial city in the Americas. Restoration work in the old part of the city helps reveal the glories of the past. Many of its palaces were converted into museums after the Revolution and more work has
been done since the old city was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982. Restoration of the historic center is one of the city government’s priorities and our time here will allow ample opportunity to evaluate the progress.

Prior to dinner, enjoy a lecture by Dr. Rena Pérez, formerly with the Ministry of Agriculture and an advisor to the Ministry of Sugar. Dr. Perez’s discussion, documented with slides, will address “Living in Cuba Today”.

Enjoy a cocktail reception and dinner on the hotel roof-top immediately after the lecture. B,L,D.

**Tuesday, February 9: Havana.** Enjoy a morning discussion by Ricardo Torres Perez on *The Changing Faces of Cuba’s Economic Structure*. Mr. Torres is a macro-economist and professor at the Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy at the University of Havana. He has been a visiting professor at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies and is currently writing his dissertation on the impact of structural change on economic growth in Cuba.

Late last year, Fidel Castro was quoted as saying to an American journalist that the Cuban economic model, “doesn’t even work for us anymore.” Monumental changes since then have been announced including, but by no means limited to, the laying off of more than half a million state workers, the privatization of small businesses, a new credit law offering certain Cubans bank loans, and the devaluation of the peso to bring it on par with the dollar. As part of our round-table, we will discuss whether these moves signify genuine change or not.

After the lecture begin exploring Havana, Cuba’s capital, whose strategic and commercial importance is reflected in the fortifications surrounding the city. Havana was declared the capital in 1519, and on December 17 of that year the first mass was celebrated under a ceiba tree which, according to legend, is an ancestor of the one standing at the east end of the Plaza de Armas. Around it rose the center of the original city – the plaza – and the first government buildings. With continued attacks by the French and English, colonial authorities decided to make Havana itself a fort, and in 1633 began constructing city walls that eventually ringed what is now Old Havana. Dr. Scarpaci will divide the walking tour into two sections. For early risers there will be a short walk around the hotel to get a sense of the neighborhood. Return to the hotel for breakfast before departing on the main carefully crafted walking tour of Old Havana.

Depart the hotel by foot and walk to visit several families who have recently opened new businesses. Enjoy a private viewing of the newly created model of Old Havana. The model serves as an excellent introduction to the layout of the city. It is color-coded by age with the historic buildings painted in crimson, pre-Revolution buildings in yellow and the post-revolutionary buildings in ivory.

End the morning at the Plaza Vieja, a stunningly beautiful old square surrounded by mansions. Although the square was for many years in a sad state of repair, that decay is being reversed by the caring restoration of Habana Vieja.

Lunch in a superb restaurant with local music.

This afternoon, enjoy a city orientation tour by bus led by Ayleen Robaiyana, an architectural historian. The tour will include an inside visit to the wonderful Riviera Hotel which, when it opened in 1958, was considered a marvel of modern design. It was owned at the time by Meyer Lansky. The hotel has recently been restored to recapture its 1950s ambience. Drive along La Rampa which climbs past the offices of Cubana, the Hotel Havana Libre and Art-Deco apartment buildings to the Parque Copelia, an entire block of a large, lush park. In the middle of the park, visit a remarkable design icon, an ice-cream parlor.
designed in 1966, which serves an estimated 30,000 customers a day. Follow Calle L south from La Rampa and arrive at the wide steps which lead to the porticoed, columned façade beyond which lies the University of Havana.

Dinner at the Café Oriente Restaurant, which is located right in Old Havana on one of its most beautiful squares. **B,L,D.**

**Wednesday, February 10: Havana.** Depart for a full day excursion to the west part of Cuba, with its jungle-covered summits dropping down limestone cliffs to verdant valleys. Drive along one of the new roads in Cuba to the town of Pinar del Rio.

Stop en route at the Orchid Farm at Soroa, which is maintained by the University of Pinar del Rio. The hilly grounds contain over 800 species of plants, including 200 endemic to Cuba, all thriving in the humid climate. After arriving at Pinar del Rio continue by a smaller road to the Valle de Vinales, Cuba’s most famous landscape, located in the province of Pinar del Rio. This area was the last refuge of the Ciboney, the hunter-gatherers who were pushed here by the more advanced Taino. The province’s mountainous landscape is riddled with caves, some running for many kilometers, in which Ciboney burial and cave paintings have been found. Visit a small tobacco farm and enjoy some time to wander through the small town of Vinales.

Enjoy a visit to a tobacco farm to learn more about the growing of tobacco and the economics of the tobacco industry in Cuba.

Enjoy lunch at a wonderful organic farm which overlooks a magnificent valley. It is really possible from here to appreciate the valley’s distinctive landscape, with its steep-sided limestone mountains called *mogotes* rising dramatically from fertile flat-floored valleys where farmers cultivate the red soil for tobacco, fruits and vegetables. The terrain resembles a Chinese brush painting.

After lunch spend some time exploring the town of Vinales.

Dinner at leisure. **B,L**

**Thursday, February 11: Havana.** After breakfast enjoy a round-table discussion on “US/Cuban Relations” to be given by Professor Raul Rodriguez from the University of Havana. Dr. Rodriguez has written extensively on US-Cuban Relations including an article for the *David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies Working Papers Series 1-10*, Harvard University 2010 entitled *Canada, the United States and Cuba: Triangular Relations as seen in Cuban Diplomatic History 1959-1962*.

Continue on to watch a rehearsal of the Danza Contemporanea de Cuba. This extraordinary dance group melds the techniques of classical ballet and American modern dance with the rippling spines and head rolls of traditional or folkloric, Afro-Cuban dance; the complex rhythms of Cuban rumba; and the twirling hands and syncopation of Spanish flamenco.

Enjoy a private lunch at the home and studio of artist Jose Fuster, who has turned his neighborhood into one enormous piece of mosaic art. Fuster is an artist who is dedicated to his creations, a vast array of artwork from ceramics evoking the nation’s African roots, as represented in the Santeria religion, to whimsical paintings drawn from ordinary life in Cuba: commuters crowded inside creaky, smoke-belching buses, the ubiquitous dominoes games in backyards and street corners. Drive though his neighborhood known as Jaimanitas before arriving at his studio and home for lunch.
From here return to Havana and visit the Presidential Palace, a huge ornate building topped by a dome. The history of Cuban political development is illustrated here from the slave uprisings to joint missions with the ex-Soviet Union.

A few minutes away by foot is the Granma Memorial which preserves the vessel that brought Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and other revolutionaries from Mexico to Cuba in 1956. The Granma, a surprisingly large launch, embodies the powerful, unstoppable spirit of the revolutionary movement.

Enjoy dinner this evening at a private restaurant. **B,L,D**.

**Friday, February 12: Havana.** Morning briefing at the US Interest Section. Because there are no formal diplomatic relations between the US and Cuba – this is not an Embassy but the Interest Section acts as an Embassy in Cuba. We have requested a briefing from a high-ranking official.

Morning visit to the new Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes: Arte Cubano (Cuban Collection) accompanied by curator Lucila Fernandez. The Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes is actually divided into two sections, occupying two buildings: the Cuban Collection and the International Collection. The museum’s origins date back to 1842 when the San Alejandro Art Academy started its collection, which forms the nucleus of the museum founded in 1913. It expanded greatly after Castro took over in 1959, notably with works from the private collections of Julio Lobo and Oscar Cintas.

After lunch at El Ajibe drive to 7 y 60 studio to view the works of four young and emerging artists - **Maria Cienfuegos, Adrian Fernandez, Frank Mujica and Alex Hernandez**.

End the day at the visit to the Santovenia Senior Center where we will have a chance to meet with staff and residents. This beautiful building is maintained by the church and is headed by Mother Consuelo Pena who recently moved to Cuba from Mexico. Senior citizens will be one of the fast-growing sectors of Cuba’s population in the coming decades. Life expectancy in Cuba is now 75 years for men and 79 for women. By 2025, according a recent article on the topic in Cuba’s communist newspaper Granma, 26 percent of Cubans will be 60 or older — the highest percentage of seniors in Latin America.

This evening we dinner will be at the privately operated La Guarida. The restaurant is perhaps the most well-known of all paladars in Havana. It was the location of the 1994 Oscar nominated film, *Strawberry and Chocolate*. **B,L,D**

**Saturday, February 13: Return** Return flight from Havana to Miami. **B.**