

Authentic excursions

Historic Florida Consulting tours show heritage and history

By Lindsey Corso

Beth LaCivita loves history.

That is evident in the tours she gives with her company, Historic Florida Consulting (HFC).

Born in Sarasota, Fla., LaCivita moved to Tallahassee in 1980 to study for her master's degree in history at Florida State University. She never looked back.

Since then she's worked for both private and governmental historical preservation groups and is the former executive director of the Tallahassee, Fla., historic preservation board.

In 2004, LaCivita started HFC, which gives guided tours of Florida's capital city, Tallahassee.

Her company offers eight different themed tours, ranging from an October ghost tour to year-round driving tours of downtown Tallahassee.

"We have all the elements here," LaCivita said. "The itineraries are custom, depending on the time and interests of the group."

The Downtown Driving Tour is the most popular, running 90 minutes in length, she said. It includes all the hot

spots like The Florida Governor's Mansion, the historic districts and the Capital Complex, including the Florida Historic Capital Museum.

"It gives a really good orientation of the city and of the campuses."

A new aspect of the driving tour is that groups can request hop-on, hop-off service. In addition to having a step-on guide at each of the locations, the group can hop off the bus and explore the attraction before heading to the next site.

Other themed options include African-American, Red Hills Region heritage, and Southern manors tours.

For groups who have more time than just an hour and a half, LaCivita has longer tours like The Forgotten Coast Tour.

It explores authentic Florida — lighthouses, local watering holes and historic waterfront towns like Panacea, Sopchoppy, Carrabelle and Appalachicola.

"The Forgotten Coast is really pristine. It's underdeveloped, has white beaches, ecotourism, wildlife; you can walk on the beach midweek and not see one person," LaCivita said.

HFC also takes groups outside Florida to historic places like Pebble Hill Plantation in Thomasville, Ga., about 1½ hours north of Tallahassee.

"We talk about quail hunting plantations like Pebble Hill and how wealthy northern industrial people came down here as a winter retreat," LaCivita said.

"It was at the end of the railroad, so it was a big tourist town."

Several unique festivals take place in Tallahassee throughout the year, including the Red Hills Horse Trials, LeMoyne Center for the Visual Arts' annual Art in the Park and Springtime Tallahassee, all of which are group friendly.

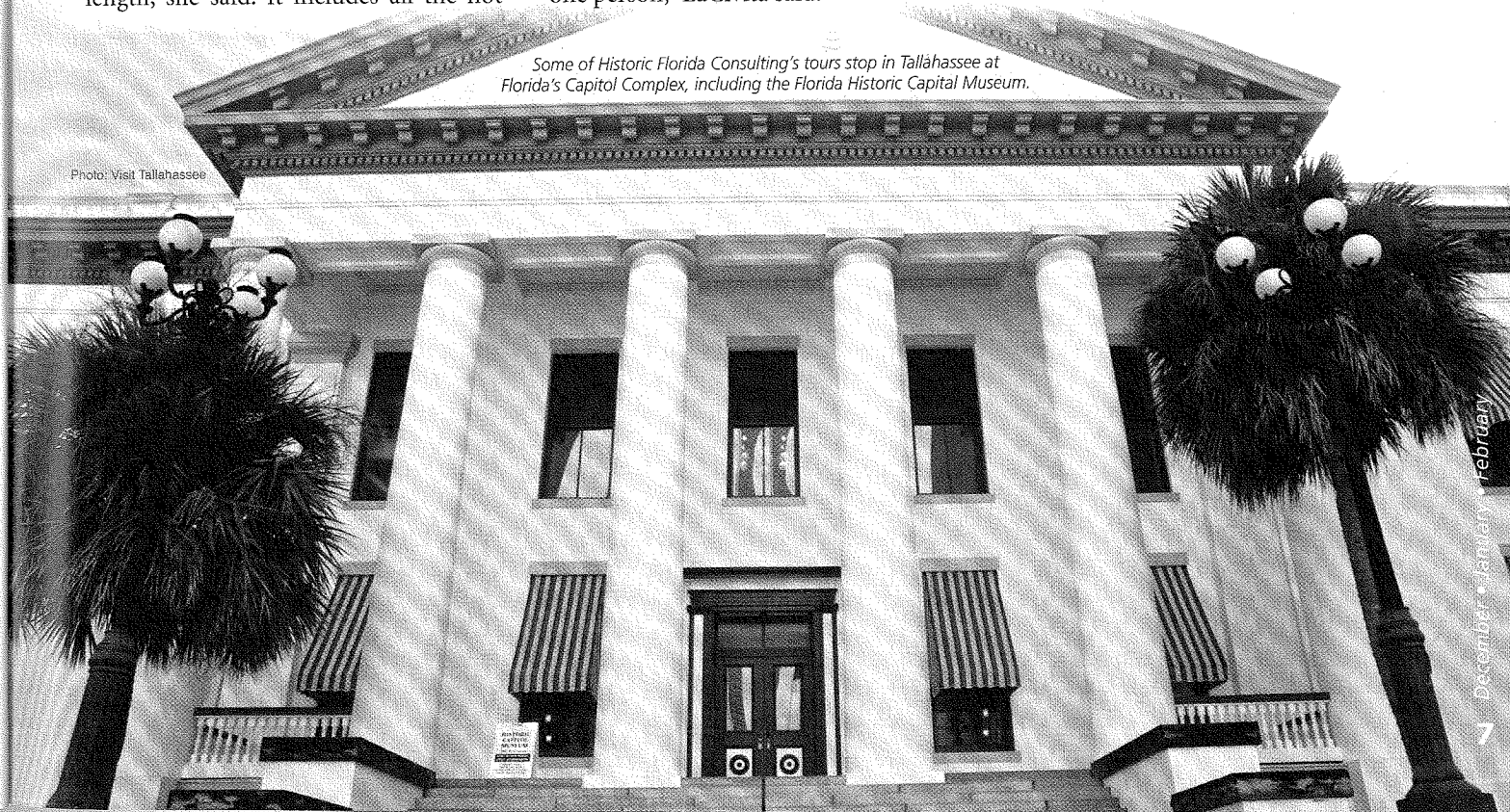
LaCivita shows groups the real Florida, putting the state's heritage and history in perspective.

There are no minimum or maximum requirement for groups, but tours should be reserved at least 60 days in advance.

Historic Florida Consulting
(850) 212-2063
www.toursintallahassee.com/tours/packages.htm

Some of Historic Florida Consulting's tours stop in Tallahassee at Florida's Capitol Complex, including the Florida Historic Capital Museum.

Photo: Visit Tallahassee



December • January • February