



International Interactions for Viva Florida 500

Many Viva Florida 500 activities this past spring had an international flair, with events involving dignitaries and displays from around the world.

On March 20, the annual Heritage Awards ceremony included "cultural moments" commemorating each of the countries and peoples who contributed to the development of Florida's long history. Presentations from The Seminole Tribe of Florida, Spain, France, Great Britain and The U.S. Colored Troops brought the Viva Florida 500 message of 500 years of history and cultural heritage to life.

April 1-3, the Florida Chamber hosted "International Days," where Viva Florida 500 was highlighted. This annual conference examines and evaluates the impact and potential for international investment in our state. With consuls and national leaders present, this successful event looked toward the next 500 years of Florida on the global economic scene.



Reenactors from Mission San Luis at International Days presented by the Florida Chamber of Commerce in Tallahassee.

On April 3, the City of St. Augustine welcomed the Mayor of the home town of Juan Ponce de León, Santervas de Campos, who bestowed a replica baptismal font of the one that rests in their church, which is the original font in which Ponce was baptized. The replica font is now a permanent feature of the Basilica in St. Augustine.

The Viva Florida 500 *El Galeón* Tour opened on April 15 in Miami. *El Galeón* is a replica sixteenth/ seventeenth century ship, which hosts a "floating Museum" below deck. The ship will stop along Florida's east coast through June 9 ([see more](#)).

On April 20, The Fort Lauderdale airshow proudly hosted the very talented *Patrulla Acrobática Paracaidista del Ejército del Aire*, the Spanish Air Force's parachute team. As a partnership forged specifically for Viva Florida 500, this display of stunning air acrobatics thrilled audiences that lined Fort Lauderdale Beach.

The French Ambassador to the U.S. visited Tallahassee on April 25 for a reception to award six World War II veterans their country's highest award, the Legion of Honor. This reception also announced exciting developments in the Franco-Floridian relationship, such as the upcoming 2014 commemoration of the founding of Fort Caroline in Jacksonville and an historical archaeology project searching for Jean

Ribault's flagship, *La Trinité*. A similar reception honoring the Floridian Legion of Honor awardees took place during Broward Navy Days' Fleet Week celebration, on May 5.

The Spanish Navy's Tall Ship Training vessel, the Juan Sebastian de Elcano, arrived at Bicentennial Park, Miami on May 1. This ship is the third largest tall ship in the world, and its arrival with the City of Miami backdrop made for headlines around the world. Several events honoring Spain's 500 year influence took place aboard the ship, along with school and public tours. Spanish dignitaries, including Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Secretary of State for Trade took part in festivities with Florida's leaders aboard this beautiful Spanish ship. The Juan Sebastian de Elcano also docked at Port Canaveral on May 8 and 9, where events with state and national legislators, Spain's Naval Attaché in the U.S and local VIPS honored the 500 year role of Spain in Cape *Cañaveral*.

More international interactions are on the horizon this summer, starting with the *24 Heures du Mans* race in France this June. Look out for the Viva Florida 500 logo and find out more about the important global role of Florida as we continue this yearlong commemoration of Florida's diverse history and cultural heritage.



Spanish Navy's Tall Ship Training vessel, the Juan Sebastian de Elcano.