

Prince Felipe of Spain opens Miami Book Fair International

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Miami Dade College President Eduardo Padron presents Don Felipe, prince of Asturias and his wife, Letizia, with a commemorative gift during the opening of the Miami Book Fair International, dedicated to Spain, on Sunday, Nov. 17, 2013.

Spain's Crown Prince Felipe and Princess Letizia gave a royal touch to the opening of the 30th edition of the Miami Book Fair International on Sunday and marked the Spanish colonization of Florida with the arrival of Juan Ponce de Leon 500 years ago.

Shouts of "Viva España" and enthusiastic applause rang out and camera flashes lit the scene as the royal couple walked into the Olympia Theater at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts to open the gala event.

Speaking in both Spanish and English, Prince Felipe said Spanish is the second international language, after English, shared by millions of people around the world and spoken with many accents in Miami alone.

Spanish cabinet ministers, ambassadors, the mayors of Miami and Miami-Dade County, other politicians, lobbyists and book lovers crowded into the theater as Miami Dade College

President Eduardo J. Padron introduced the prince.

A stunningly jazzy flamenco and operatic troupe performed Suite Hispania and a symphony performed Suite Andalucía by Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona to kick off the opening.

The prince and princess, winding up a seven-day swing through the United States, will get the keys to the city of Miami, lunch with Mayor Tomás Regalado, meet Florida Gov. Rick Scott and visit a Spanish food and design exhibit before their departure on Tuesday.

His first duty after arriving Sunday from Los Angeles was to inaugurate the Miami Book Fair, one of the largest in the United States, which opened Sunday and runs through Nov. 24 and is dedicated this year to Spain.

More than 500 Spanish books, 20 Spanish authors and musical, dance and theater groups as well as movies and documentaries will be presented at the fair's Spanish Pavilion, with the support of the Ministries of Culture, Education and Foreign Affairs.

Overall, more than 500 authors will be present around the Miami Dade College's downtown

Wolfson campus, and more than 250,000 people are expected to attend the readings and outdoors sales kiosks.

Among the authors will be bestsellers Carl Hiaasen and Edwidge Danticat as well as former Vice President Dick Cheney, feminist Erica Jong and actress Anjelica Huston.

The royal couple's three-day visit to Miami also will include a dinner Monday night at the Freedom Tower hosted by the Spain-Florida 500 Year Foundation, created in 2009 to organize celebrations marking explorer Ponce de Leon's landing in Florida in 1513.

Felipe also will make a visit to Univision headquarters Monday, in between receiving the keys to Miami at the Mandarin Hotel and lunch with Regalado at the Rusty Pelican restaurant, according to his official schedule.

On Tuesday the crown prince will address an economic seminar at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, visiting the Coral Way K-8 Center, a school that has offered a unique bilingual program since 1963 with the backing of the Spanish government.

Trade between Spain and Florida totals more than \$1 billion a year, according to Spanish government figures. About 50,000 Spanish citizens live within the Miami consulate's area of responsibility, and about 300 Spanish firms in Florida employ 18,000 people.

The royal couple's last stop will be at Tapas: Spanish Design for Food, an exhibit at the Moore building in the Design District that highlights how design drives Spanish cooking at the kitchen, the table and the food.

Felipe and Letizia, a former TV journalist, flew in from Los Angeles Sunday after spending four days marking California's own Spanish heritage, from Fray Junipero Sierra's 300-year-old mission to a Google Maps project showing the Hispanic presence in the United States.

They have been accompanied on the trip by Foreign Minister José Manuel Garcia-Margallo and other high Spanish officials. The U.S. ambassador to Madrid, James Costos, accompanied the couple in the Miami leg of their journey.