

It's a White Christmas in Houston as Landry's Downtown Aquarium Unveils White Tiger Exhibit

HOUSTON, Dec. 2 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Kicking off the holiday season in Houston with excitement, Landry's, Inc. (NYSE: [LNY](#) - [News](#)), one of the nation's largest casual dining and entertainment companies, announced the arrival of four white tigers as permanent residents of Downtown Aquarium.

<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20041202/DATH011-a>
<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20041202/DATH011-b>
<http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20041202/DATH011-c>

The tigers, 2 males and 2 females ranging in age from 1 year to 2 months, are located in a newly-designed habitat on the first floor of Downtown Aquarium's main building. The habitat is enclosed in glass to provide spectacular viewing for guests and incorporates a designated sleeping area, trees, mock temple ruins and several water features, including a swimming pool, into an ideal living arrangement for the four tigers. The exhibit, "White Tigers of the Maharaja's Temple," will be the final stop in the Aquarium Adventure.

"We're very pleased to add such an exciting new exhibition for our visitors to Downtown Aquarium," said Tilman Fertitta, Landry's chairman, chief executive officer and president. "We think Houstonians will love getting to know these exotic cats and will welcome the tigers enthusiastically."

Downtown Aquarium was unanimously accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) in September. Professionals from the organization assisted Landry's with the design of the tigers' new habitat.

"Like all AZA accredited facilities, Downtown Aquarium underwent an extremely thorough, year-long examination conducted by experts in the field of aquarium and zoological operations," said Denny Lewis, AZA Director of Accreditation. "This review encompassed every aspect of its operations, including animal care, physical facilities, staff, veterinary care, safety and security, and conservation and education programs. It is AZA's belief that assuring the highest standards in animal care is paramount to aquarium and zoological operations, and that good conscience permits no higher priority."

Landry's maintains a staff of 120 professional biologists and animal care specialists at its Aquarium and Rainforest Cafe concepts nationwide. At the head of this team is Jim Prappas, Director of Biology, who brings more than 19 years of experience in the fields of animal care, maintenance and research to the company. His extensive background includes serving as Curator at the Pittsburgh Zoo and Animal Husbandry Director at Texas State Aquarium in Corpus Christi. In addition to bringing a wealth of experience in animal care, Prappas hand-selected the best aquatic and mammal specialists from across the country when he built his team for Landry's. Spending the most time with Downtown Aquarium's four new tigers will be Curator of Mammals and Birds, Patricia Shoemaker. Shoemaker previously worked at the Houston Zoo.

There are estimated to be a few dozen white tigers in the world, with most residing in the U.S. The white tigers that Landry's has brought to Downtown Aquarium will be the only ones in Houston. Nero, Marina, Coral and the yet-to-be-named cub enjoy climbing, playing with each other and their toys in the water, and, of course, taking "cat naps."

"Landry's has gained valuable experience in taking care of tigers with our Ocean Journey Aquarium in Denver, which has three tigers of its own," said Prappas. "We have worked with the AZA to design a habitat that will delight both our white tigers and our Houston visitors."

Landry's is also working to help protect tigers globally. The worldwide tiger population has dropped by 95% percent since 1900, hurt by poaching and loss of natural habitat and prey. About 5,000 to 7,000 wild tigers remain in Asia, though more than 20,000 tigers are maintained in the U.S. There are five remaining tiger subspecies; Bengal, of which white tigers are a variant; Indo-Chinese; Siberian; South China; and Sumatran. Landry's partners with WildAid, a nonprofit organization working to eliminate the illegal wildlife trade, on conservation efforts such as the construction of a ranger station to help prevent the illegal harvest of tigers.

"We're excited about having the white tigers here to serve as ambassadors for tiger conservation," said Shoemaker.

Aquarium Adventure Exhibit tickets are \$8.99 for adults, \$7.99 for seniors and \$5.99 for children. Downtown Aquarium is also introducing an All-Day Adventure Pass, which will give visitors unlimited access to the Aquarium exhibits, Shark Voyage, Diving Bell Ferris Wheel, Lighthouse Dive and the carousel. The all-day pass will cost \$15.99.

Landry's Restaurants, Inc., is one of the nation's largest and fastest growing casual-dining and entertainment companies. Publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange, Landry's owns and operates over 300 properties, including Landry's Seafood House, Joe's Crab Shack, The Crab House, Rainforest Cafe, Charley's Crab, Willie G's Seafood & Steak House, The Chart House and Saltgrass Steak House. Landry's also owns several icon developments, including Downtown Aquarium in Houston; Kemah Boardwalk, a magnificent 40-acre, family-oriented themed entertainment destination and Ocean Journey in Denver. The company employs 30,000 workers in 36 states.