

New and Improved Places to Stay Highlight Travel to Florida Keys

The Examiner Online

09/29/15

Unique Visitors/Month: 15,240,940

Ad Value: TBD

<http://www.examiner.com/article/new-and-improved-places-to-stay-highlight-travel-to-florida-keys>

examiner.com

New and improved places to stay highlight travel to Florida Keys 12



Accommodation options in the Florida Keys, like the island chain itself, are rich in atmosphere and appeal. Now through 2016, eight new properties - comprising just over 1,000 rooms – are planning to open from Key Largo to Key West.

Additionally, a number of meticulously renovated lodgings are welcoming visitors. Each one joins existing accommodations in showcasing aspects of the Keys character, culture and historic influences.

The new properties begin at the head of the island chain in Key Largo with the elegant Playa Largo Resort & Spa, the latest hotel to join Marriott's Autograph Collection. Set to open in 2016, the 14.5-acre waterfront resort features 144 luxury rooms and suites, 10 private bungalows, and a three-bedroom beach house.

Amenities include a private marina, plus multiple bars and gourmet restaurants. Relax in the full-service spa and fitness offerings, a wide range of watersports, and white sand beach. www.playalargoresort.com

In Islamorada, four leading lodgings are receiving significant enhancements. Look for new additions at Postcard Inn Beach Resort at Holiday Isle, La Siesta Resort, Pelican Cove Resort and Marina and the Islamorada Resort, all part of the Islamorada Resort Company.

Particularly notable is the relaunch of the Islamorada Resort as Amara Cay Resort, an upscale boutique hotel. Property renovations included increasing the number of rooms and suites to 110, updating outdoor amenities and creating an Italian-style eatery. Guests can enjoy a Mercedes-Benz shuttle to Islamorada's most popular locales. www.amaracayresort.com

Also in Islamorada, after a yearlong multimillion-dollar renovation, the Islander Resort has joined the expanding collection of Guy Harvey Outpost Resorts. Renovations include upgrades and added amenities throughout both the main 114-unit oceanside property and the 25-unit bayside marina townhouse compound. www.guyharveyoutpostislamorada.com

Vacationers should be able to spot the Faro Blanco Resort & Yacht Club with ease: it incorporates the famed Faro Blanco Lighthouse, a Middle Keys landmark since the 1950s.

With the lighthouse as its "beacon," the Marathon property features an upscale 125-room Hyatt Place hotel with two pools, a fitness center, meeting space and a waterfront restaurant and outdoor bar called Lighthouse Grill. Boaters can enjoy a 74-slip state-of-the-art marina capable of handling vessels up to 100 feet long. www.faroblancoresort.com/hotel

Another Middle Keys property seeing renovations over the next several months is Banana Bay Resort and Marina. Situated on 10 acres, the resort features 59 newly renovated deluxe guestrooms, a remodeled lobby and a restored pool area. All renovations are slated for completion this fall. www.bananabay.com

Eclectic, artistic Key West has news to announce, too. A trio of newly built properties located on North Roosevelt Blvd have opened. The Gates Hotel, debuted its initial building last spring. The second building is slated to open winter 2016. Highlights include the Rum Row bar, two large swimming pools with cabanas and daybeds, and a promise of "old Key West." www.gateshotelkeywest.com

The second Keys Collection property, the Fairfield Inn and Suites, opened its doors in last MaY with 133 rooms including 17 suites. Amenities include poolside cabanas, business and fitness centers, and daily complimentary breakfast. www.marriott.com.

Slated to open in December, the Hilton Garden Inn is to complete the trio of Keys Collection properties. The hotel is to have 141 new rooms, some featuring balconies. The property's on-site amenities include an outdoor resort-style swimming pool with poolside service, a restaurant open daily for breakfast and a lobby bar. Guests also will have access to 24-hour business and fitness centers.

Not far away in Old Town Key West the property formerly known as the Southern Cross Hotel was purchased in early 2015 and has been transformed and rebranded into the Saint Hotel Key West. The historic two-story building features 37 renovated guest rooms and six suites. www.thesainthotelkeywest.com

In addition, three other Old Town properties have been purchased and are slated for improvements in the coming year. Two of them, Ocean Breeze Inn and Southwinds Motel, have been combined into one entity that now operates as the Southwinds Motel. The 32-room budget-friendly property has undergone renovations and upgrades to its appearance including landscaping, painting and enhancements to all guestrooms. www.keywestsouthwinds.com.

The third property, formerly known as the Spindrift Motel, is to be transformed into H2O Suites, a luxury accommodation featuring 22 one-bedroom suites. Plans call for 11 of the suites to have private plunge pools, while the resort also will feature a rooftop swimming pool for all its guests. The new property is set to open in summer 2016.

When you go

Appealing as they are, these are only a handful of the Keys properties showcasing enhancements or opening. Others include Islamorada's renovated Smuggler's Cove Resort and Marina, Marathon's new Courtyard by Marriott, the renovated Tranquility Bay Beach House Resort and Captain Pip's Marina & Hideaway.

The 125-mile Florida Keys island chain offers a rich natural environment, flourishing creative community, balmy subtropical climate and a friendly laidback vibe that seems worlds away from everyday cares. These new and revitalized properties – with their diverse designs, amenities, prices and locations – will add their own unique flavors to the intriguing mix as they welcome visitors eager to experience and explore the Keys.

www.fla-keys.com.