

## Hotels Put the “Stay” in Staycation.

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# Miami Herald

## Hotels put the ‘stay’ in staycation

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Locals looking to splurge on a getaway near home this summer have some difficult questions to ponder when choosing among the region's newest hotels.

Should there be an ice skating rink and bowling alley downstairs? Does the restaurant need to be linked to a celebrity chef? Should the beach be a short walk or a quick shuttle ride away? Are yoga classes offered inside or on the roof — or both? Is there a food truck on site?

And — seriously — does the toilet need to be equipped with a remote control and mood lighting?

With these details and more, here's our guide to some of the most noteworthy new arrivals on the hospitality scene in Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

### BROWARD

#### • Beachwalk Resort

**What's new:** The 33-story condo-hotel opened in May with 432 simply decorated individual rooms that can be joined to create 216 two-bedroom suites. Guests have a small restaurant, fitness center and pool on site, and an electric buggy shuttles beachgoers over the Intracoastal Waterway to the beach. Shuttle service is also available to Hollywood beach, Gulfstream Park and Aventura Mall.

**Bragging rights:** Every room has a balcony, and suites boast a washer and dryer as well as a small kitchen. Hotel staffers will stock up the fridge if guests preorder groceries. Guests will have access to [Hyde Beach Kitchen & Cocktails](#) on the beach once it opens later this summer.

**Caveat emptor:** A trip to the beach requires a walk across a bridge or a shuttle ride. During a recent visit, some of the units — which, as condos, have individual owners — were being remodeled, which meant elevators were busy with workers and construction materials.

**Best for:** Families looking for a getaway with many comforts of home.

**Details:** 2602 E. Hallandale Beach Blvd., Hallandale Beach; [beachwalkresortfl.com](http://beachwalkresortfl.com); 954-266-0147. Mid-August weekend starts about \$127 a night for a room with two full beds, \$169 a night for a one-bedroom suite and \$229 a night for a two-bedroom suite.

#### • Royal Blues Hotel

**What's new:** The 12-room boutique property opened across from the beach in October with a slightly curved design meant to evoke a yacht; each room overlooks the ocean. The restaurant, Chanson, boasts a seafood-centric menu and an aquarium built into the ceiling.

**Bragging rights:** Hollywood and Broadway producer [Edward Walson](#) (*Blue Jasmine*, *Magic in the Moonlight*) founded the hotel, which has hosted celebrities including Woody Allen and Susan Lucci. As the only Florida property to belong to the exclusive Relais & Châteaux association, Royal Blues has high-end touches including original art throughout, Nespresso machines in the rooms, teak-paneled walls and remote controls that allow users to flush, heat, lift, light and otherwise operate the toilets.

**Caveat emptor:** Deerfield Beach is a pretty sleepy place. During a recent visit, a tourist was snoozing in a beach chair across the street from the hotel, and a parking spot sat open on a sunny day. But neighborhood shops and restaurants are a close walk away, and the hotel can arrange for everything from Lamborghini rentals to private yacht charters.

**Best for:** Couples looking for a quiet retreat with luxury amenities.

**Details:** 45 S. Ocean Way, Deerfield Beach; [royalblueshotel.com](http://royalblueshotel.com). Mid-August weekend rates start at \$215 a night.



The Vintro Hotel & Kitchen, located in the middle of a cultural neighborhood, includes a rooftop deck. **CHARLES TRAINOR JR** - MIAMI HERALD STAFF

### MIAMI-DADE

#### • 1 Hotel South Beach

**What's new:** Once known as the Gansevoort Hotel Miami and Perry South Beach, the 426-room hotel went through a two-year gutting and restoration before opening in March as an eco-conscious resort awash in reclaimed wood and terrariums.

**Bragging rights:** Four pools, including a picturesque rooftop offering; Beachcraft, a restaurant from celebrity chef Tom Colicchio and STK Miami.

**Caveat emptor:** Anyone looking for an intimate Art Deco boutique won't find that vibe at this giant resort — but they will find some of the priciest rooms on the beach.

**Best for:** Green-minded guests who will appreciate touches like little chalkboards rather than notepads by the bed.

**Details:** 2341 Collins Ave, Miami Beach; <https://1hotels.com/south-beach>; 305-604-1000. Mid-August weekend rates start at \$719 a night.

#### • Hotel Croydon

**What's new:** The 1930s building, which originally opened as the Croydon Arms, was vacant before being completely renovated for its new life as a sophisticated 104-room boutique hotel with a pool, spa, workout space, sun decks, shop and gastropub. The grand opening was last summer.

**Bragging rights:** Lots of options are packed into a small space, including yoga classes in the spa or on the rooftop deck and a chic shop off the lobby. Shuttle service is available to Miami International Airport.

**Caveat emptor:** The Mid-Beach location is up-and-coming, but it's a little far from South Beach action. Guests have to cross Collins Avenue for beach access.

**Best for:** Couples or friends who want to explore the burgeoning Mid-Beach neighborhood — or don't mind a short drive into South Beach.

**Details:** 3720 Collins Ave., Miami Beach; [www.hotelcroydonmiamibeach.com](http://www.hotelcroydonmiamibeach.com); 305-938-1145. Mid-August weekend rates start at \$208 a night.

#### • Miami Beach Edition

**What's new:** After being shuttered for years, the former Seville Hotel was reimaged and expanded into this 294-room collaboration between hotelier Ian Schrager and Marriott International. The final product, which opened in December, is a chic tropical resort on the ocean, with a lobby decked out in white, gold and lush greenery; beachy clean rooms; two pools and an on-site sand space for picnics or lounging.

**Bragging rights:** The resort offers much to explore, including chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten's high-end Matador Room and open, airy Market. The [Basement](#) area is described as a “multidimensional entertainment hub” with a nightclub, ice skating and bowling alley.

**Caveat emptor:** Many of the activities cost extra. Bowling is \$50 per lane per hour for the first four people and \$10 for each additional person (tax and service charge not included). Ice skating costs \$25 a person per half hour.

**Best for:** Couples and families who want to have plenty to do without leaving the property.

**Details:** 2901 Collins Ave.; [www.editionhotels.com/miami-beach](http://www.editionhotels.com/miami-beach); 786-257-4500. Mid-August weekend rates start at \$399 a night.

#### • Thompson Miami Beach

**What's new:** The onetime apartment complex with three connected towers underwent an \$82 million renovation to become a 380-room hotel with two pools, a restaurant and a couple of bars. Open since November, the mid-century design is glamorous but still grounded in Floridian details.

**Bragging rights:** The restaurant, [Seagrape](#), is from Miami chef Michelle Bernstein, who also crafted the tasting menu at the 1930s House bar (an actual house that was relocated to the hotel site).

**Caveat emptor:** Another addition to the Mid-Beach scene gives that area more buzz but requires guests to travel to get to South Beach.

**Best for:** Couples who want a grown-up getaway.

**Details:** 4041 Collins Ave., Miami Beach; [www.thompsonhotels.com/hotels/thompson-miami-beach](http://www.thompsonhotels.com/hotels/thompson-miami-beach); 786-605-4041. Mid-August weekend rates start at about \$263 a night.

#### - Vintro Hotel & Kitchen

**What's new:** Once the Park Avenue Hotel, this neighborhood gem near the Bass Museum of Art, Miami City Ballet and Collins Park opened last summer as a 50-room boutique next to the Collins Canal. Hammocks, sun chairs and a plunge pool are situated atop the building. The long, high-ceilinged Vintro Kitchen features a Mediterranean menu, while the library beckons with a long table and bookshelves packed with tomes and memorabilia. Rooms are outfitted with pops of citrus and bright artwork, and the bathrooms provide a whole different eyeful thanks to "voyeur showers."

**Bragging rights:** Named one of the country's top 25 hotels in the 2015 Travelers' Choice awards from TripAdvisor. The elevator is a bibliophile's dream.

**Caveat emptor:** With its location a few blocks from the ocean, this hotel is not ideal for visitors who want to make frequent visits to the sand (though a shuttle is available). Construction will start within the next few months on an addition that will include another 50 rooms, a pool and a spa on the site.

**Best for:** Couples under 18 and those who want to be out on the water. A variety of amenities. They'll even cater an event for you at the dock. In the hotel, the lobby's Market Gallery offers sandwiches, pizzas and other snacks 24/7 so you won't be caught off-guard after a late check-in or a long day on the water.

**Details:** 2212 S. Collins Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33139; 305-375-1234. Rooms start at \$179 on weekends. Bookings of two or more nights are 12 percent off, excluding Oct. 29-30.

#### - Also of note

**Hyatt Centric Key West** is the 105-room resort on the island. The old restaurant, which was an Outback Steakhouse, has been replaced with Oltremare (Italian for "overseas").

**AC Hotel Miami Beach** is a brand that just opened in June. American menu. 2912 Collins Ave. S., Miami Beach, FL 33139; 786-375-1234.

**Aloft South Beach** includes a rooftop bar and a story tower. 1100 S. Miami Ave., Miami, FL 33130; 305-375-1234. August week.

#### MONROE

#### - The Market

**What's new:** The Market is a new concept occupying the old dive bar space and featuring live music and local artists.

**Bragging rights:** The Market is the first brand-new concept in Key West, and they're stocking it with locally sourced products.

**Caveat emptor:** The Market is an uncomfortable place to live music and eat.

**Best for:** Groups.

**Details:** 200 S. Duval St., Key West, FL 33401; \$219 a night, 15 percent off weekdays.

#### - The Gates Hotel

**What's new:** A former chain hotel near the spot where U.S. 1 enters Key West has been transformed into a "boutique hotel." It's got 100 rooms now and another 145 on the way when they finish transforming a second building on the property.

**Bragging rights:** Comfortably chic, it's the South Florida version of mid-century modern with a bleached-wood, classy-beach-house aesthetic. An on-property food truck, the Blind Pig, serves tasty snacks for breakfast, lunch and dinner. On-site parking and bikes to take downtown, as well as daily bike tours of the island at sunrise and sunset. It's a long-ish walk but a short bike ride to Smathers Beach on the island's Atlantic coast.

**Caveat emptor:** Being at the "entrance" to the island means it's as far as you can get from the heart of Old Town and still be in Key West. And while many rooms have water views, that view is across busy five-lane North Roosevelt Boulevard — also known as U.S. 1.

**Best for:** Guests who want an up-to-date hotel with modern amenities but don't mind a drive or taxi ride back from downtown. A shuttle is planned once the rest of the resort is complete.

**Details:** 3824 North Roosevelt Blvd., Key West; [gateshotelkeywest.com](http://gateshotelkeywest.com); 305-320-0930. Rooms start at \$200 a night; Florida residents get 15 percent off.

#### - Faro Blanco Resort & Yacht Club

**What's new:** A historic Middle Keys resort has been re-made as a 125-room Hyatt Place hotel with a brand-new marina and restaurant on Florida Bay.

**Bragging rights:** For tranquil Keys waterfront, Florida Bay is hard to beat. The new marina has docking for boats up to 120 feet; stay onboard your boat and enjoy the resort amenities. They'll even cater an event for you at the dock. In the hotel, the lobby's Market Gallery offers sandwiches, pizzas and other snacks 24/7 so you won't be caught off-guard after a late check-in or a long day on the water.

**Caveat emptor:** At this Marathon location, if you're not on your own boat you'll need your car to get almost anywhere — and Marathon hasn't quite caught up yet to the cultural and entertainment scene of Key West or Islamorada.

**Best for:** Families and those who want to be out on the water. A variety of amenities. They'll even cater an event for you at the dock. In the hotel, the lobby's Market Gallery offers sandwiches, pizzas and other snacks 24/7 so you won't be caught off-guard after a late check-in or a long day on the water.

**Details:** 12500 Highway, Marathon; [faroblancoresort.com](http://faroblancoresort.com); 305-743-1234. Rooms start at \$179 on weekends. Bookings of two or more nights are 12 percent off, excluding Oct. 29-30.

**Amara Cay Resort** is in Key West, this is a former chain hotel taken down to the studs and re-made as an upscale resort. It's got 110 rooms, including oceanfront suites. The new look feels like South Beach on a Keys vacation. The old restaurant, which was an Outback Steakhouse, has been replaced with Oltremare (Italian for "overseas").

**Bragging rights:** The oceanfront location is classic Islamorada — sandy beach, palm trees, the Alligator Reef lighthouse visible offshore, which means the reef is in easy reach for dive, snorkel or fishing trips. It's also the perfect location for lounging on the beach and with the on-site bar and restaurant there's no need to get on the highway for a fine meal.

**Caveat emptor:** In the Upper Keys, almost any exploration involves getting on that highway (the hotel does offer a shuttle for destinations within three miles). Islamorada has recently been adding to its store of new restaurants and galleries — but it's not South Beach. Or even Key West.

**Best for:** People seeking the classic Islamorada resort experience with an updated polish. A fine place to relax after a day of fishing the flats or the ocean — or to hang out on the beach while waiting for your favorite fisherperson to return.

**Details:** 80001 Overseas Highway, Islamorada; [amaracayresort.com](http://amaracayresort.com); 305-664-0073. Rooms start at \$161 a night.

