



The Breakers' oceanfront tower accommodations recently were redecorated in colours of the sea and sky. PHOTOS: THE BREAKERS PALM BEACH

CHECKING IN

THE BREAKERS IS A JEWEL IN GLITTERING PALM BEACH



ROCHELLE LASH

Dahlings, it's divine. I feel as though I have arrived, socially speaking, when I pull up at The Breakers Palm Beach, the iconic centrepiece of Florida's glamorous Gold Coast.

The Breakers is a touchstone for refinement, grandeur and superlative hospitality, and likely the most impressive and complete resort in the U.S.

The ornate interiors and opulent gardens of this Italian Renaissance-style treasure are exquisite. Cherubs frolic in the Florentine fountains. The boutiques are tucked into colonnaded stone arcades. The accommodations are the very embodiment of luxury. And the majestic lobby is topped with a ceiling fresco that would impress even Michelangelo.

Still, this splendid resort is not stuffy or formal; at least it hasn't been since the turn of the 21st century. Today, The Breakers is

casually sophisticated. Let's say relaxed, in a refined way. There is a restaurant for every mood and the fashion is resort chic, rather than jacket-and-tie. And, multi-generations of families get together for parent-child golf or tennis and teen-tween happenings.

While The Breakers is pricey, it has virtually unparalleled resort facilities, and guests can also simply enjoy the exclusive surroundings, the prestige and the professional service.

The hotel does not charge a resort fee and includes unlimited fitness classes — they're great — plus Wi-Fi, local calls and a daily activity calendar that might feature a garden tour, a historic bike tour or, for youngsters, a simple science lab.

**BACKSTORY**

Founded in the heady 1890s, the palatial getaway is timeless, having drawn more than a century of privileged guests, from the mighty industrialists of the Gilded Age to the dynamic globe-trotters of the Internet Age.

The key to this success is that the heirs of The Breakers' founder, Henry Flagler, are still the sole owners. Family pride

and commitment result in an annual US\$30 million investment to keep the resort at the tip-top of the hospitality game, from artisan craftsmanship in decor to evolutionary cuisine.

I would like to say that The Breakers is the most extraordinary hotel that I have visited in the U.S. But it is so much more than a hotel.

**THE EXPERIENCE**

The Breakers is a sweeping Atlantic oceanfront estate with, well, everything: a beach club; four spacious swimming pools, 36 holes of championship golf, 10 Har-Tru tennis courts, nine restaurants and four magnificent ballrooms. The flashy Ocean Fitness gym has the most advanced equipment available, and all classes, like Ab Blast, Mindful Meditation and Body Sculpting, are included at no extra charge.

The Spa at The Breakers is a sublime new sanctuary that shimmers in shades of white and mother-of-pearl. Among the signature services are massages on a bed of warm quartz sand, customized facials with skin analysis and organic body scrubs with an aromatic lavender mask.

**FLAGLER CLUB**

The Breakers has taken its guest experience to a sumptuous new level with Flagler Club, an exclusive boutique-hotel-within-the-hotel situated on the top floors of the main building. Flagler Club has 19 staff members serving 25 suites, including a chauffeur for the Tesla courtesy car and private concierges.

Flagler Club delivers best-in-show hospitality. The private terrace glows at sunset with a panoramic view of Palm Beach. The beds — oh, the beds — are mechanically inclining mammoths draped in the softest, powder blue Frette sheets. The posh toiletries are from Jo Malone London and the room key-cards are embossed with each guest's name.

If the way to a VIP's heart is through gourmet bites, Flagler Club has it covered, with perfect help-yourself treats for breakfasts and light lunches, social-hour small plates with champagne and cocktails, plus evening sweets.

**THE CUISINE**

The all-new Seafood Bar has the look of a sleek yacht with sweeping lines, a lively aquarium bar and the Atlantic Ocean as a dramatic backdrop. The fresh catch includes stone crab claws, spicy tuna tartare and crab cakes, plus Florida grouper, snapper and scallops. And Seafood Bar offers informal fare — not only main courses — like the lobster club sandwich with truffle fries or blue crab fried rice.

The Flagler Steakhouse is the clubby spot for filet mignon, juicy rib-eyes and a connoisseur's

IF YOU GO

**The Breakers Palm Beach:** 888-Breakers/888-273-2537, 561-655-6611, thebreakers.com. One S. County Rd., Palm Beach, Florida.

**Price:** Rates vary seasonally. Rooms start at US\$699 per night, Jan.-April (suites cost more). Holiday rates are higher. Rates start at US\$369 June-Sept. Flagler Club starts at US\$1,400, including private check-in, terrace/lounge with day-evening light fare, Tesla courtesy car. All rates include Beach Club (pools, beach setups), bike tours, daily calendar of activities, Ocean Fitness centre/classes, local calls, Wi-Fi and Family Entertainment Center (video arcade, toddler playground, playground, outdoor sports court, movies, activities for children/teens/tweens). Extra: valet parking, golf, tennis, spa treatments, water sports (boat rides, snorkelling, paddle boarding, scuba intro), Camp Breakers for ages three-12 has sports, fun workshops, crafts.

**Discover The Palm Beaches:** 800-833-5733, 561-233-3000, thepalmbeaches.com; Visit Florida: 888-735-2872, visitflorida.com



The Breakers Palm Beach is the splendid centrepiece of South Florida's Atlantic Gold Coast, with exemplary resort facilities and service.

selection of wine and Scotch.

On the casual side, the indoor-outdoor Italian Restaurant is next door to the resort's Family Entertainment Centre. Sun worshippers can chill with seafood salads, lobster sliders and key lime pie at the beachfront Ocean Grill; or lunch lightly at the open-air Surf Break, which serves Wagyu burgers, spicy tacos and cold beer, plus the big game on TV.

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