

CHECKING IN

DIPLOMAT GETS HOLLYWOOD MAKEOVER

Iconic Florida resort joins 21st century with major update



ROCHELLE LASH

What would you do with US\$100 million?

In the case of The Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, Fla., that cool chunk of cash bought a long, languid dip in the fountain of youth.

This beauty queen has enjoyed as storied a past as any 60-year-old party girl. Liza Minnelli and Frank Sinatra sang. Joan Rivers, Billy Crystal and Jerry Seinfeld killed. Almost every U.S. president since the hotel's opening in 1958, including John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Barack Obama, but not Donald Trump, has cocooned here.

Today, after a three-year makeover to 90 per cent of the resort, the landmark establishment is younger, prettier and attracting a new fan base. She has gone from glitter-glam to contemporary-chic. And she is a lady of leisure, no longer all about conferences.

If you love The Diplomat and don't like change, you can still count on the resort's defining factors: the Atlantic Ocean-front location, the dramatic curved facade and the sense of place and prestige at one of South Florida's largest playgrounds.

It's also known for its service — seasoned concierges, housekeepers and servers seem able to handle anything.

WOW FACTORS

Among the sensational on-trend updates at The Diplomat are modern izakaya cuisine at Monkitaail, inspired by Japanese sake cafés, new poolside cabanas designed by fashion leader Trina Turk and sleek patio furniture.

The swimming pools have been reconfigured into a spectacular multi-level water paradise with waterfalls and new sun chairs.

For children, the thrilling Dip+Slide water playground, Candy & Cones, and gaming arcades are the new essentials.

The Kids' Club (ages four to 12) organizes Kitchen Chem-



The Diplomat Beach Resort has added new family features as part of its update. THE DIPLOMAT BEACH RESORT



Monkitaail at The Diplomat serves modern izakaya Japanese cuisine.

ists, Epic Explorers, Secret Agent and Art sessions.

The Diplomat Spa crafts nearly 50 beauty and body treatments with aromatic herbs, antioxidants and algae.

The new Breathe technique uses essences of plants and oils for the ultimate in chilling out.

**NEW DESIGN**

The resort's iconic lobby, a towering atrium with palm trees and jungle ferns, is an exciting crossroads for travellers. Today, the lobby has a new tropical look

with rattan chairs, vintage wood tables and sun-weathered fabrics in coral and aqua.

Also new, the lobby lounge opens to the outdoors, where fire pits dance in front of the dark ocean and night sky.

All this lushness climaxes at The Hotel Bar, which shakes and stirs classics the Papa Doblé Daiquiri and the Singapore Sling.

The newly decorated guest rooms — more than 1,000 of them — also are closer to nature, bathed in linen textures and neutral tones of sand and driftwood.

It's a light, bright, refreshing style, with modern accents.

**NEW CUISINE**

Celebrity chefs rule The Diplomat's big-time cuisine scene. Michael Schulson operates the dazzling, richly decorated Monkitaail, where you start off with a connoisseurs' choice of sake or exotic craft cocktails.

The menu features such delicacies as sushi, octopus, duck, hamachi, Japanese scallops and Kobe beef.

And Monkitaail harbours an almost-secret karaoke bar, if you feel the urge to be on stage.

Iron Chef Geoffrey Zakarian has created a vibrant all-American scene at The Diplomat's Point Royal. The early evening stylish set wraps around the central bar for happy hour, with seafood and \$7 drinks.

Zakarian's coastal fare includes king crab, Key West shrimp, oysters and specialties like a soft-shell crab sandwich, butter-poached lobster roll, cornmeal-crusted snapper, as well as glazed short ribs and Angus steak.

Even Zakarian's breakfast is a tour de force. The buffet features lychee yogurt with macadamia nuts, potato tortillas and breakfast Reubens, along with omelettes, brioche French toast and a breakfast club with guacamole and cheddar.

The sophisticated Diplomat Prime, now totally redesigned

IF YOU GO

Hollywood, Fla., is 18 kilometres south of Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport and 13 kilometres south of Port Everglades, the third-largest cruise port in the world (after Miami and Port Canaveral).

**The Diplomat Beach Resort:** 954-602-6000, 855-689-2911, diplomatresort.com; 3555 S. Ocean Drive, Hollywood, Fla. Hilton Honors Program applies.

**Price:** Best-rate guarantee applies. Prices fluctuate and are approximate. Packages on availability. Holiday in Hollywood offers a fourth night free. Warm Winter Leisure Weekend Escape includes a US\$50 per night, daily resort credit with a two-night booking, Thursday through Sunday on certain dates. Watch for online specials. Regular rates: Rooms start at approximately US\$499 (Nov.-April) and US\$299 (May-Oct.) for two, including two pools, beachfront, 24-hour fitness centre, marina access to Fort Lauderdale water taxi. Resort fee: \$30 per room, covers pools, beach loungers, one fitness class a day, in-room Wi-Fi, local/toll-free calls, beach chairs, bottled water on arrival, non-motorized water sports. Extra: Kids' Club, Jet Ski, parking, \$30 (self) or \$39 (valet), spa treatments (954-602-8400). Children under 18 stay for free.

**Fort Lauderdale:** 800-356-1662 or 800-22-SUN-NY/800-227-8669; sunny.org. **Florida info:** 888-735-2872, visitflorida.com.

as a 1950s-inspired steak house, serves fine wines and an updated menu of Wagyu beef aged in-house, duck-fat fries, Florida stone crab and jumbo shrimp cocktails. It's not all fancy.

Casual fare is happening at several new stops, including Bristol's Burgers for burgers, salads and milkshakes; Playa, a beach bar with Latin lunches and super-fruit tropical drinks; and Portico Beer & Wine Garden for Italian fare and Saturday Sunset Sessions with a DJ.

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