



Windjammer Resort & Beach Club encompasses studios and apartments directly on the Atlantic Ocean in charming Lauderdale-By-The-Sea. Its current low-season rates, in effect until mid-August, make it an appealing destination this spring and summer. WINDJAMMER RESORT & BEACH CLUB

CHECKING IN

FLORIDA RESORT A GREAT SPRING GETAWAY

Lauderdale-by-the-Sea's Windjammer offering low-season rates until August



ROCHELLE LASH

The Windjammer Resort & Beach Club is a quintessentially Atlantic Ocean getaway, situated on one of the most beautiful beaches of Florida's Gold Coast. It's in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, a walkable neighbourhood tucked between glitzy Fort Lauderdale and laid-back Pompano Beach. Why are we talking about this so close to summer? Because Windjammer has terrific low-season prices. Here's an example: Four people sharing a modest one-bedroom apartment would pay \$175 to \$245 U.S. per night, until mid-August, and slightly lower from then until mid-December. Other options include a studio or two-bedroom. **You're home:** The Windjammer is the merger of two vintage motels, encompassing 33 apartments, all with well-equipped kitchens, and many with partial or full ocean views. You can move in for a few days or a few weeks. The establishment rounds

out with two generously heated swimming pools, each with a different vibe, and the beach directly outside the door. The Windjammer also has a Quebec connection. The Boutin family, originally from Sherbrooke, bought the place 40 years ago; current manager Jean Boutin has kept it thriving. The luxury factors are the beachfront location and a well constructed building that is quiet. It's the ultimate in convenience, with free parking right outside your front door. Boutin welcomes his guests with a basket of wine and snacks. As well, it's less than a block to the supermarket, and you can fire up the communal barbecue for supper. "People tell us it's a joy to have everything at hand," Boutin said. "And the savings are considerable because you can cook in. "But it's more than that. We also try for an emotional connection. Maybe it's our relaxed atmosphere or that we always try to be helpful. We want our guests to say: 'You have made me feel good.'" **White Glove Award:** The Windjammer has been graced with the White Glove Award for the past 15 years. The designation is given by the Superior Small Lodging of



The Windjammer has been honoured with the White Glove Award for superior housekeeping for the past 15 years.

Florida organization to member hotels that have a 100 per cent score in the housekeeping portion of their inspection. "Superior Small Lodging said we have 'spotless accommodations,'" Boutin said, "so we are particularly proud of that." The establishment closes every autumn for three weeks for a super-cleaning or to renovate furniture, flooring or appliances. The Windjammer is well-maintained outdoors, too. The property's fence is freshly painted, the pool chairs are top-drawer and the swimming pools are spotless. The glass breakfront and pool decks are hosed down regularly to wash away salt and sand. I noticed maintenance people moving discreetly through the property, checking, tidying and polishing. **Accommodations:** The Windjam-

mer has a variety of units: five studios for two people, 25 one-bedroom units for four (using a sofa bed) and three two-bedroom suites for up to six. The accommodations are more like private apartments than hotel rooms, with comfortable, homespun decor. The rooms have been updated with bedside lamps, wood-look floors, new wallpaper and fresh bedding. Boutin has installed full-length mirrors, lots of bath towels and beach towels, high-energy showers, security boxes and flat-screen TVs in both the bedrooms and living rooms. **The neighbourhood:** The Windjammer is one block from Anglin's Square, the town centre, which is lined with ice-cream parlours, restaurants and beach shops. You can walk everywhere,

or board the colourful Pelican Hopper, a free shuttle. Music in the Square is a Friday night beach-style block party that brings everyone to the streets to mingle and dance to live bands. It's co-organized by local eateries including The Village Grille and the Village Pump (they're connected). Both places rock from morning until night with food and drinks, indoors and on terraces. Large menus feature quesadillas, burgers, steaks, fish and salads, plus daily specials like Parmesan chicken and a sushi bar, daily from 4 p.m. **The ocean:** The ocean beckons with windsurfing, paddle boarding, snorkelling and scuba diving. The launch is directly at the Windjammer beach where a live coral reef, about 40 metres offshore, is the centre of underwater attention.

IF YOU GO

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea is 25 kilometres north of Ft. Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport; 954-776-1000, lbts.com. **Windjammer Resort & Beach Club:** 954-776-4232, windjammerresort.com; 4244 El Mar Drive, Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, FL 33308. **Rates:** One-bedroom units, for up to four people: April-Aug. 18, \$175-\$245 U.S., including Wi-Fi, two heated swimming pools, beach chairs/umbrellas, poolside barbecue, paperback library, games, pool toys, guest computer. Studios for two people, and two-bedroom, two-bathroom units for six are available. Rates decrease slightly Aug. 19-Dec. 21. There is a 10-per-cent discount for repeat guests, military and police/emergency/education workers (Canadians, too). Smoking areas and laundry machines available. **Village Grille/Village Pump:** 954-776-5092, villagegrille.com, 4404 El Mar Drive; Lauderdale-By-The-Sea; both open daily. **Sunrise Paddleboards:** 954-440-4562, sunrisepaddleboards.com. **Greater Fort Lauderdale Tourism:** 800-356-1662 or 800-22-SUN-NY/800-227-8669; sunny.org; Visit Florida: 888-735-2872, visitflorida.com. **Superior Small Lodging:** floridassl.org.

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