



The new Costa Hollywood Beach Resort, developed by Montrealer Moses Bensusan, faces both the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway.

HOTEL INTEL

# MONTREALER BUILDS NEW MEMORIES

Inspired by childhood days at the shore, he develops new resort in Hollywood, Fla.



ROCHELLE LASH

Montrealer Moses Bensusan vacationed in Hollywood, Fla., when he was a child, and loved it so much he pledged he would return as a grown-up. He has done so, in a big way.

Bensusan is the developer of the Costa Hollywood Beach Resort, a striking new condo-hotel in greater Fort Lauderdale, the No. 1 winter destination for eastern Canadians. "Hollywood is an authentic playground for children and parents," he said. "Those family memories on the seashore are forever."

Hollywood is known for its beautiful wide Atlantic beach and the Boardwalk, a folksy thoroughfare filled with strollers and cyclists and lined with vintage mom-and-pop shops and eateries. The family-friendly Costa Hollywood Beach Resort is steps from all this oceanfront action.

**The scene:** An engineer trained at Université de Strasbourg in France, Bensusan is both a developer and construction

contractor, so Costa is built with substance and lots of style.

There is Montreal chic in the stunning marble lobby and sharp guest room interiors. Pure Florida sunshine lights up the vast rooftop pool, a showpiece framed with living walls of foliage, white sun-brellas and potted palms.

I saw a dash of Vegas, too, at the hip Cielo Restaurant and Sky Bar, a buzzy rooftop bistro with a sensational view of the sparkling Intracoastal Waterway.

A DJ mixes lounge music on weekends, and cocktails at the daily social hour cost \$6. Cielo features the catch-of-the-day burger, ceviche with jalapeños, tuna and watermelon salad, pulled beef pizza and thick rib-eye steaks with truffle fries.

The complex also includes the Coffee Store for sandwiches, salads and smoothies, and for all guests, complimentary morning coffee and croissants.

High-end dining is on the menu, too. Piegari, an Argentine-inspired restaurant, will open near the end of the year.

**Accommodations:** "Costa is distinctive because it's a fusion," said general manager Neal Spivack. "You can cocoon with the comforts of home, or enjoy sun, sand, resort features and house-keeping. Either way, you won't be



The resort has attractive apartments that are ideal for long-term stays

homesick."

The hotel has 307 accommodations, ranging from good-sized studios to sweeping three-bedroom residential suites, all ideal for extended vacations. Most have glass-fronted balconies and partial views of either the Atlantic Ocean or the Intracoastal Waterway. The North Tower is a few metres closer to the beach, the South Tower is home to the seventh-floor pool, and the two buildings connect around a communal courtyard.

The interiors are airy and bright, with floor-to-ceiling windows, white walls, minimalist furniture and rich leather living room seating. It's residential style, so most accommodations have kitchenettes or kitchens with high-styled Euro-cabinetry and high-function appliances

from Italy. The bathrooms are top-drawer, with Kohler fixtures and oversized rain showers.

The majority of the units are spacious one-bedroom suites with full kitchens, flexible enough to accommodate two, four or six guests, using sofa beds. The more compact king studios have wet bars and mini-fridges.

Costa is tech-forward. You can text the e-concierge for various requests: housekeeping, valet parking, coffee pods, restaurant reservations or kids' board games.

Costa also runs Recharge, a fun eco-project for children. If they fill up a beach bucket with debris for recycling, they get a treat. It's working: Hollywood Beach is close to pristine.

**Canadian hub:** Bensusan is not the only Canadian to adore this

IF YOU GO

**Costa Hollywood Beach Resort:** 844-863-6180, 954-613-3700, costahollywoodresort.com; 777 N. Ocean Drive, Hollywood, Fla.

**Price:** Rates fluctuate. Studios and one- to three-bedroom suites available. Studios start at approximately US\$299 for two, May-Nov.; US\$359, Dec.-April. For one-bedroom suites, add US\$50-\$80. Resort fee: \$25. Includes coffee/croissants, housekeeping, in-room tea/pod coffee, fitness centre, rooftop pool/sundeck, Wi-Fi, two beach chairs. Packages: Suite Life adds parking, beach extras; Romance package adds chocolates, wine. Discounts for seniors, CAA.

**Cielo Restaurant and Sky Bar:** daily, 11 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; social hour, 4:30-7 p.m., \$6 cocktails/bites.

**Hollywood:** floridashollywood.org.

Florida city — 68 per cent of international visitors to Hollywood in February were Canadian. Le Soleil de la Floride, a weekly newspaper, is distributed at the Visitor Information Center of Hollywood, and snowbirds celebrate annually with music, food and dance at Canada Fest (canadafest.com), usually in January. rochelle@rochellelash.com

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