

HOTEL INTEL

White Elephant has Palm Beach roots



ROCHELLE LASH

The fetching White Elephant Palm Beach is new, but it has deep roots in the tony town’s legendary social structure.

The White Elephant started out nearly 100 years ago as the Bradley Park Hotel, an exclusive establishment with a casino and beach club. It was favoured by tycoons and high rollers who celebrated the Roaring Twenties at one of the first U.S. resort towns, helping to create Florida’s fashionable Gold Coast.

Reimagined in 2020 on the same footprint, with the same alluring Mediterranean Revival arches, terrasses and latticework, this boutique hotel is more ravishing than ever.

The White Elephant is a petite property with 13 rooms and 19 suites sumptuously decorated in the spirit of an aristocratic home. Add tantalizing, globally inspired cuisine and come-hither ambience at LoLa 41, and Palm Beach habitués have a chic new playground.

At the helm is managing director Bernhard Duerrmeier, an alumnus of numerous Four Seasons, including the one in Montreal. He has lived in many countries, trained at the superlative École hôtelière de Lausanne, competes as a triathlete and speaks four languages. We said bonjour-hi-guten-tag-and-hola and he dished about White Elephant Palm Beach.

Travel + Leisure magazine listed it as one of 2021’s best new hotels in the world for its

refreshing, relaxing design and upbeat dining and bar scene. (If the hotel’s name sounds familiar, it has an equally attractive affiliate in Nantucket, Mass.)

White Elephant Palm Beach’s look is a new take on tropical Florida. The walls are creamy and the furniture is covered in sun-bleached linen and fawn-coloured leather, with watercolour blues as soothing as gentle ocean waves. There is excitement, too, in the splashes of colourful pillows and random thrills of gold accessories.

Life of luxury: White Elephant is built around a compact courtyard with St-Tropez-style black and white canopies shading LoLa’s patio, and palms and ivy framing a wading pool. But the hotel is more than eye candy.

The impressive 120-piece art collection features works by influential modernists including pop artist Robert Rauschenberg and abstract expressionist Kenzo Okada.

Duerrmeier believes in haute hospitality, so there are treats on the house, including afternoon wine and cheese and morning coffee and doughnuts, as well as twice-daily housekeeping.

Pool attendants pass with sunscreen and ice cream, and the hotel’s shuttle to the Atlantic carries the essentials: chairs, towels, kids’ toys, sun-brellas and water.

The guest rooms and suites are cushy, with linens by Pratesi of Italy, toiletries by L’Occitane of France and spacious marble bathrooms with double sinks and large glass showers.

The two penthouse suites, which configure to between two and four bedrooms, are extravagant spaces designed for entertaining, with large living rooms, full kitchens and sweeping terrasses.



White Elephant Palm Beach is a new hotel based on a 1920s Mediterranean Revival heritage landmark.
PHOTOS: CHI-THIEN NGUYEN/ELKUS MANFREDI ARCHITECTS



White Elephant’s suites have a serene colour scheme.

You’ll cruise around town in style, too. The hotel’s fleet includes top-drawer bicycles by Priority, Radio Flyer wagons for kids, a BMW 7 Series courtesy car, as well as BMWs available for guests to borrow.

For an extra fee, you can enrich your Palm Beach lifestyle with a seagoing venture. Barton & Gray Hinckley motor launches are available for charter — the perfect ride for a picnic sur l’eau.

Cuisine: LoLa 41, featuring two bars and indoor-outdoor dining, has taken Palm Beach by storm with power breakfasts, sociable lunches, dinners and a buzzy happy hour that features \$10 sushi rolls and \$2 oysters. (The “41” refers to countries around the 41st parallel spanning Asia,

Europe and the Americas.)

Favourites range from casual fare — the tuna burger, a beef burger with foie gras, shrimp salad — to main courses such as Florida grouper, scallops, veal chops or a wagyu beef French dip, plus carpaccio of octopus, salmon and beef. LoLa’s globally influenced dishes include duck dumplings, Korean beef bulgogi, shrimp tempura, hoisin-lacquered ribs and Peking duck.

Around town: White Elephant is within a few blocks of the Atlantic Ocean, the Intracoastal Waterway and the newly redeveloped Royal Poinciana Plaza, home to outlets for fashion megastars such as Jimmy Choo, Hermès and Saint Laurent.

The hotel loans bicycles, and

IF YOU GO

White Elephant Palm Beach: 561-832-7050, 844-462-9483, whiteelephantpalmbeach.com; 280 Sunset Ave., Palm Beach, Fla. Accessible facilities.

Price: Rooms start at US\$650, suites at US\$995. Packages: Toes in the Sand (bubbly, cocktails, romantic gifts); Soak Up the Sun (tickets to Flagler Museum, Norton Museum, Palm Beach County Courthouse, Johnson History Museum).

LoLa 41: 561-599-5652, lola41.com.

Palm Beach tourism: 800-554-7256, thepalmbeaches.com. Florida tourism: 888-735-2872, visitflorida.com.

Palm Beach’s car-free Lake Trail cycling path is one block away. It passes the Flagler Museum, the Society of the Four Arts Botanical Gardens and the Royal Poinciana Plaza, as well as magnificent waterfront mansions and yachts. The Palm Beach Par 3 Golf Course and two tennis centres — at Seaview Park and Phipps Ocean Park — are near the White Elephant.

The all-around tourism stop Visit Palm Beach (visitpalmbeach.com) organizes sports like paddling, as well as history tours and catamaran cruises.

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