

Key comforts abound at Hawks Cay



The pirate ship pool at the Hawks Cay resort's Coral Cay Activities & Adventures kids area.

As one of the largest resorts in the Florida Keys, the 177-room Hawks Cay has always offered something for everyone, particularly families with children.

But by the time a two-year, multimillion-dollar resort enhancement plan is completed this year, "everyone" will encompass even more travelers.

Located in the Middle Keys near Marathon, about 60 miles north of Key West, the sprawling resort spreads out over 60 acres on Duck Key, connected by the resort's open-air shuttle buses.

In 2014, the resort began the renovation, one that would eventually touch nearly every part of the property.

The biggest change will be a makeover to the resort's 85-slip marina and the addition of the Angler & Ale at the Marina Walk this spring, a new restaurant that will be open to the public as well as resort guests.

Already completed are upgrades to the property's meetings rooms and public spaces, guestrooms and suites. New amenities include the Oasis, an adults-only area with luxury cabanas around an adults-only pool; two penthouses; and 16 family suites with built-in sleeping areas for kids.



Two new 1,400-square-foot suite penthouses at the Hawks Cay resort feature en suite telescopes for stargazing.

Sheldon Suga, Hawks Cay's managing director, calls the property the only true island resort destination in the Florida Keys.

"We describe Hawks Cay as 'the only Key you'll need,' and we mean it," he said.

As a guest of the resort early on in the renovation, the breadth of activities and amenities Hawks offers on-site clearly made traveling with kids much easier.

Even guests looking to swim with dolphins don't have to go off campus: Hawks' dolphin encounter program is the only resort-based program that enables guests to interact and swim with dolphins and, according to the resort, is the only facility in the mainland U.S. that offers free public viewing of trained dolphins. Programs start at \$60 per person.

A separate kids area, renamed Coral Cay Activities & Adventures, has its own recently enhanced pirate ship pool with water cannons as well as a basketball court and a high-tech hangout room for teens.

The active set will enjoy eight lighted tennis courts, kayaking through mangrove-lined channels and an array of watersports including kiteboarding, stand-up paddleboarding and fishing charters, all of which leave from the on-site marina.



The Hawks Cay resort's dolphin encounter program is touted as the only facility in the mainland U.S. that offers free public viewing of trained dolphins.

The renovation also included upgrades to the 7,000-square-foot Calm Waters Spa, the new cabanas at the adults-only Oasis area and the two new 1,400-square-foot suite penthouses with en suite telescopes for stargazing from expansive private rooftop terraces. The penthouses accommodate up to four people with separate living areas, two bedrooms and two full baths.

The adult additions cater to what Suga described as a burgeoning market for the resort, couples and groups without kids, whether they be girlfriend getaways or guys' fishing trips. A new By Air, Land or Sea Getaway package caters to these groups, offering penthouse accommodations, a private dinner from the resort's executive chef, a couples massage and pool cabana and roundtrip transportation in either a stretch limo or private seaplane.

Package rates for four people for four nights begin at \$10,500 with limousine service or \$13,000 with seaplane service. Rates do not include taxes, gratuities, daily resort fee and surcharges.

For larger groups, the resort's upgrades also include enhancements and additions to its waterfront meetings, weddings and events spaces, which Suga says gives Hawks the largest event and conference space in the Keys: 20,000 square feet of meetings and banquet space, able to accommodate up to 600 guests.

Hawks charges a \$39 daily resort fee per accommodation, which includes WiFi; self- and valet parking; access to the Coral Cay Club and the fitness center; all sports facilities, including hard and clay tennis courts; local and toll-free phone calls; and additional seasonal inclusions.

Rates at Hawks Cay start at \$249 per night. Visit www.hawkscay.com.

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