

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

Check In

A Key Escape
With a Twist

STOCK ISLAND, Fla. — The Keys were buzzing with gossip. Whenever I mentioned that I was staying at the newly-opened Oceans Edge Key West Hotel and Marina to a bartender, cab driver, or random stranger, the response was “Did you hear that Kanye West owns that hotel?”

I’m not sure how or why the rumor started, but a spokesperson for the hotel confirmed that these enthusiastic natives were the victims of fake news. The rapper does not own the hotel. Also, if West owned Oceans Edge, I’m quite sure the name would be something like the Kanye West Keys, Key West. For the record, it’s owned by developer Pritam Singh.

Oceans Edge covers 20 acres and features six swimming pools and a dedicated dog park. It’s the largest hotel and marina complex in the Keys. It has a lot going for it (did I mention six swimming pools?), but its greatest asset is the view. All 175 guest rooms and suites face onto the ocean. That fact makes Oceans Edge a very appealing option. There is a price to pay for the views. Despite the name, the hotel isn’t located in Key West. It’s on Stock Island, which is east of Key West. It’s not far, but if you’re planning on spending a rousing evening on the town, make sure you have \$25 or so for the 4-mile cab ride home. If you’re the kind of person who likes to open the door and stumble onto the street and directly into the action, this may not be the best option for you.

But there are advantages to being away from the craziness of Duval Street. The area is free of inebriated tourists tripping down the sidewalks. It’s quaint, and I mean that in the best possible way. Given the hotel’s location directly on the water, guests can sign up for yoga on paddleboards (yes, that’s a thing) and sunset kayaking.

My room was completely fresh and new. I’m fairly certain I was the first person to inhabit it, so I was careful not to scuff the wall with my suitcase. It was a beautiful, bright space with art created by locals and a bit of tropical flair, but not the kind of heavy-handed ocean-inspired decor that hits you over the head with a conch shell.

All the basics of Oceans Edge rated high. The bed was heavenly, the shower pressure was ideal, and my room had a balcony. If I craned my neck just so I could see the sunset. The better option, however, was a sunset cocktail on a blue and white chaise by the pool.

OCEANS EDGE RESORT AND MARINA 5950 Peninsula Ave., Key West, Fla. 33040; 305-306-6942. www.OceansEdgeKeyWest.com. Rates start at \$299

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OCEANS EDGE

HERE

Please Touch This Art

Touch a ceramic jar once held by a Chinese potter more than 4,000 years ago, or a gold belt buckle made during Julius Caesar’s reign. Vermont’s Brattleboro Museum and Art Center has received 313 works of art from the late physician and philanthropist Arthur M. Sackler, who wanted to donate these items to a museum for hands-on educational purposes, rather than for display. These objects, created between 2000 BCE and 1850, include ceramics, stoneware, earthenware, wood, bronze, gold, and textiles from Ancient Near Eastern, Chinese, Korean, Byzantine, Islamic, and Pre-Columbian American cultures. This fall, visitors can engage in new museum programs that incor-



MEET YOUR SWEETHEART ON THE SNOW Don’t have a Valentine this year? Head to Black Mountain ski area on Feb. 11 and you might meet the ski bum of your dreams on the double chairlift. The mountain hosts Chairlift Speed Dating

from 2 to 4 p.m. for those 18 years and older. Hit it off with someone on the eight-minute ride up and then hit the slopes together, or ski down to the lift and try again. For après ski fun, head to the Lostbo Pub, which features music by Ben Cook, Best Pick Up Line contests, and

schwag from Sam Adams. Speed dating event free with a lift ticket. 800-475-4669, www.blackmt.com.

THERE

Travel to Antarctica in Style

Discover the world’s coldest, driest, highest, and cleanest continent aboard a new ultra-luxury mega yacht. The Scenic Eclipse, which holds 200 passengers on these sailings, departs Ushuaia, Argentina, and heads for Antarctica, where guests can explore penguin colonies, kayak among icebergs, travel in a submarine to see whales and seals in their natural environment, and take helicopter trips to places few have ever visited. Zero-speed stabilizer fins provide extra stability for a smoother crossing, and onboard experts keep passengers entertained with talks on geology, marine biology, ornithology, and more. The 12-day Ultimate Antarctica trip, offered by Scenic, includes six days on Antarctica. The yacht

has 114 suites (with verandas) that range from 344 to 2,500 square feet, and offers nearly a 1:1 guest-to-staff ratio, a 240-seat theater, and free WiFi. Rates start at \$16,995, including butlers, transfers, meals, and more. Choose from six departures between December 2018 and February 2019. 844-788-7985, www.scenicusa.com.

Go Museum-Hopping in The Emerald City

Visiting Seattle this month? Escape the often-drippy winter weather and enjoy half-price admission at 42 participating museums during Seattle Museum Month. Touch sea cucumbers and urchins at the Seattle Aquarium, visit the Kids Discovery Museum for Messy Mondays, and see more than 175 aircraft and spacecraft structures at the Museum of Flight, considered the largest independent, nonprofit air and space museum in the world. Or visit Chihuly Garden and Glass, next to the Space Needle, and see live glass-blowing demonstrations; the Museum of Pop Culture (formerly the EMP),

which showcases music, pop culture, and science fiction displays; and the Woodland Park Zoo, where you can see Yola, the baby gorilla. The catch: You must stay at a participating hotel (see website for full list) to qualify for the museum deal, which is good for up to four people per hotel room. www.seattlemuseummonth.com.

EVERYWHERE

Sweet Dreams, Not Stiff Neck

Some travel pillows force your head into an awkward position, often pitching it forward so you’re looking at your knees, and can leave you stiff and sore after a flight or long car trip. Or they’re overly bulky for taking on your adventures. Sea to Summit’s smartly designed Aeros Ultralight Traveller Pillow weighs just 2.4 ounces and comes in a handy little case that fits in your palm. The inflatable pillow, part of the company’s Travelling Light collection, offers thick cushioning on the sides for good comfort and

support, but slims down behind your neck so you can rest in a more natural position. \$34.95 at www.summitthut.com. 303-440-8977, www.seatosummit.com.

AN APP FOR EASY NAVIGATING TripIt, the travel app that lets you keep all your travel-related ID and trip info handy, has added an invaluable new navigation feature. TripIt Navigator helps you get from point A to point B, showing you all the different travel options, and the cost and travel time for each one. That means you can look up the best transportation options between an airport and your hotel, for instance, before you arrive, or find transportation instantly from your current location to a destination. Another new feature: You can merge two TripIt accounts from the mobile app. TripIt has also redesigned the flight screen for iOS 9.0 users so it’s easier to access flight details, airport maps, airport lounges, and more. Basic TripIt app free; \$49 for TripIt Pro. www.tripit.com. KARI BODNARCHUK

