

TRAVEL

In Old Town Key West, a Hotel with Artsy Aspirations

Check In

By CHERYL LU-LIEN TAN MARCH 11, 2016

Rates

Standard rooms start at \$399.

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<http://nyti.ms/1XjoIM>

Basics

Land is scarce in cozy Key West — especially so near the historic seaport that often is just as jammed with tourists as it is with gift shops. In the heart of this area, the Marker Resort opened last winter, the city's first built-from-scratch hotel in Old Town Key West in 20 years. Spread out over two acres, this luxury boutique hotel, done in a pristine white palette with bright blue accents, was designed with a nod to traditional Key West conch-style architecture. It features 96 spacious and airy rooms, many of which have verandas that open onto one of the property's three pools and tropical greenery. Whimsical sculptures on the property by celebrated local artists such as Adam Russell and John Martini were a plus. The Marker Resort, owned by LaSalle Hotel Properties and managed by Highgate Hotels, in November began collaborating with the local arts space the Studios of Key West to amp up its artsy theme. It now has a revolving art program and soon plans to offer a regular painting night at the property.

Location

Perched on the edge of the historic seaport and just a few blocks from Key West's infamously boisterous Duval Street, the Marker is centrally located. Most tourist attractions — from Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park to the Ernest Hemingway Home — are between five and 20 minutes away on foot, much less by bicycle or taxi.

The Room

Our "Garden King" room was a comfortable affair: Because of the large glass doors that opened onto a veranda overlooking the pool, the space was pleasantly filled with sunlight. There was something rather disappointingly generic about the overall décor, however — its modern furnishings with their clean lines and general shininess were perfectly sleek but possessed none of the quirky charms of much of the rest of Key West. Small touches such as playful sculptures of a cat and a dog-headed figure in the lotus position, along with books by Hemingway, Carl Hiaasen and Jimmy Buffett, displayed just so, felt a hair contrived. In addition to the usual lineup of spirits and chips, the minibar came stocked with Key lime-flavored jelly beans and cookies.

Breakfast

Room service was available, though breakfast, included in our room rate, was served in the poolside restaurant Cero Bodega. The menu includes basic egg dishes as well as a Tostone Crab Benedict that consists of fried tostones topped with crab cakes, poached eggs, andouille sausage and sriracha hollandaise with breakfast

potatoes.

The Bathroom

A stark, white-tiled space with an austere, industrial feel — warmed up only slightly with artwork featuring Key West elements such as a watercolor of a green parrot. We had a spacious bathtub and a large shower; the key lime-scented shampoo and conditioner by Key West Aloe, a local business, were a lovely touch.

Amenities

Besides free Wi-Fi and a large and very well air-conditioned fitness center, the hotel has three pools, one of which is a more secluded, “child-free” pool for those seeking a tranquil respite from rambunctious tykes. Poolside cocktail service is available as you’re sunning yourself on deck chairs or chic, domed outdoor beds. Covered parking onsite is available to guests for \$12 a night.

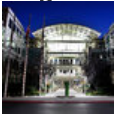
Bottom Line

A boutique hotel that is clean, modern and luxurious, if just a little sterile, in the heart of Old Town Key West.

The Marker Resort Key West, 200 William Street, 305-501-5193; themarkerkeywest.com.

A version of this article appears in print on March 13, 2016, on page TR4 of the New York edition with the headline: An Airy, Leafy Refuge From the Crowd.

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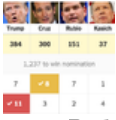
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