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Life is Good at Trump International

BY DEBBIE MARTINEZ

So, you've worked hard all week and long for a little respite? Well, there is a place just a few miles away in Sunny Isles where time can stand still for a couple of days and the sound of the waterfalls will lull you into a trance. Treat yourself to a weekend at Trump International where Life is Good!

Not knowing what to expect, as I had never been to Sunny Isles, I made my way to the resort and knew I had fallen onto something special as I made my way to my room. All rooms have bay or ocean views and are equipped with refrigerator and microwave. Beautifully decorated in tones of lime green and teal blue, which, according to Greg Columbus, Associate Director of Group Sales, brings the outside in for a very serene effect. My balcony overlooked the massive grotto pool with its numerous waterfalls and the beach below. Now where did I put my bikini?

My first "let's get acquainted with Sunny Isles" was a stop at the Dezer Collection Auto Museum. Now, before you roll your eyes, let me tell you how blown away I was. This, my friends, is not your run of the mill car museum. Housed in a 240,000 square foot complex is one of the largest collections of James Bond cars, props and memorabilia. Valued at over \$15 million, the exhibition took my breath away. But, and this is a big but, not to be out done, there is Hollywood Cars of the Stars that include Back to the Future, the Munsters and Holy Batcave, Robin.....The Batmobile. This is an absolute must see with military vehicles, American classics, European classics and so much more including a 50's diner.

A quick change and I was off to dinner at Neomi's Grill to sit and look outside at yet another waterfall. Everything on their extensive menu put together by Rising Star Chef Kurtis Jantz looked appealing, but the Chianti "Classico" Shortribs with potato omelet was my choice along with a crab cake to start. If I thought that was unbeatable, it is only because I hadn't had the fried cheesecake yet. "Yet" being the key word because I ordered it both nights. All I can say is that it was sinful.

As I waddled my way back to the room, it occurred to me that I saw a scale in the bathroom. Word of caution: Do Not get on it. With all the great food and drink at the resort, throw a towel over it and forget it. That being said, there is so much you can do to ward off the calories. The resort boasts a newly equipped gym, a massive outdoor lap pool, water sports of every kind, tennis courts or the resort will drive you over to Turnberry



for a round of golf. If walking the mall is how you get your exercise, fear not, as you will be transported in style by their Mercedes Benz shuttle to Bal Harbor or Aventura mall.

As morning beckoned, it was difficult to drag myself out of my exceedingly soft and comfortable bed but I had a spa appointment I didn't want to miss. The Aquanox Spa offers a nice selection of treatments as well as a sauna, steam room and a lounge of tranquility where you can help yourself to teas, cucumber infused water, fruit and nuts. While waiting for my treatment, I curled up in one of their chairs, pulled a waiting blanket over me and watched the flicker of a candle as I felt my body and mind unwind. I experienced the Signature Gold Facial, which is not to be missed and decided to pamper myself even more by getting a sugar body scrub. I think the last time my skin felt that soft was the day I was born. Warning: this could become habit forming.

Next stop, Gili's Beach Club. This is a hidden gem and the great thing is, you don't have to be a guest at the hotel to come and enjoy the club. The beach club is an outdoor bar and restaurant with a menu that surpasses any beach club menu I've seen. It consists of ten appetizers, Seafood Bar replete with shrimp, crab claws and lobster, six salads, seven sandwiches, six entrees and four tempting desserts along with a kid's menu. I opted for the Gili's Salad that is marinated beets, goat cheese, pistachios and baby arugula with red zinfandel vinaigrette. Oh and by the way, I topped it off with a Gili's Sunrise- tequila, cranberry, orange, and pineapple juice topped with Moet & Chandon and fresh ginger flower. Do I hear an Amen?

The beachside bar has TVs and big comfy chairs but if you want that toes in the sand feeling, they will set you up with a chaise and umbrella. Once set up, there is no need to move, unless you want to take a dip in the ocean, because they will bring the food and drink to you. If, on the other hand,

you seek something a bit more private, there are air-conditioned cabanas you can rent complete with private shower, TV and frig. Now that is having the best of both worlds! What a fun way to enjoy a day at the beach with the kids, by yourself or with someone special.

As I was sitting there with a Gili's sunrise in hand (no ones counting), looking out at the royal blue umbrellas dotting the beach, it occurred to me that the ocean was meeting the sea foam cushions on the white wicker furniture of the beach club. What a beautiful seascape....it doesn't get much better than this.

An early Sunday morning walk with only the footprints of those before me to keep me and my thoughts company. How light and refreshed I was feeling. A quick few laps in the pool and off to one heck of a breakfast buffet. Inside or outside seating was the first question, and then came the offer of a newspaper and fresh squeezed orange juice. Drinking my coffee and gazing around at the tables I realized that Trump International has something to offer everyone. For the single person who wants a few days to themselves, no problem. There is the beach, pool, spa and several little areas where you can grab a book and relax on cushioned sofas. For the family, no problem. Let Trumps qualified staff at Planet Kids entertain the tots while you two have some adult time. Want to get away with your sweetheart, no problem. The two of you can do as much or as little as you like.

By the afternoon, I was ensconced on a chaise by one of the waterfalls dreading having to leave. About that time, a staff member came by offering popsicles to young and old alike. I caught myself taking it all in, the people at the pool bar, the kids in the pool while the parents sat on the side, frozen drink in hand. Couples sitting under the waterfall and all the time, the staff never missed a beat. I found the staff here to have a remarkable energy and genuineness about them that is engaging engaging.

Well, as the saying goes, "All good things must end" but as my waiter, Lucian said, "You have to be happy. You get stressed? For what? You die young." So with those words hanging in the air, my question to you is, "Who's going to meet me at Gili's Beach Club next weekend?"

For more information on Trump International and their summer packages, visit them at www.trumpmiami.com or 305-692-5600

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