

# OCEAN DRIVE



ALEX RODRIGUEZ



## MAJOR KEY

SNOWBIRDS MAY ESCAPE TO MIAMI FOR THE WINTER, BUT FARTHER SOUTH LIES A TROPICAL PARADISE THAT'S TRULY A WORLD APART.

Need to get away from the bustle and velvet ropes of South Beach? A quick cruise down the A1A leads you to the Florida Keys, stretching from Key Largo to Key West and encircled by crystal-clear waters and white-sand beaches. Here, the top six places to visit when you need both an escape and an extension of paradise.

### GOOD AS NEW: AMARA CAY RESORT, ISLAMORADA

If you can't quite manage the four-hour trek to the southernmost point in the continental US, check into the recently renovated Amara Cay Resort—winner of the 2015 Sandi Design Award for Design Excellence in Hospitality from the International

Interior Design Association—located on mile marker 80 (just 45 minutes away from Key West). Enjoy snorkeling from your very own private beach, a romantic Italian dinner at Oltremare, or getting lost in that book you've been meaning to read as you swing on a hammock, umbrella-adorned cocktail in hand. *80001 Overseas Hwy., Islamorada, 305-664-0073; amaracayresort.com*

### BLAST FROM THE PAST: CASA MARINA, A WALDORF ASTORIA RESORT, KEY WEST

Shortly after Casa Marina opened in 1920, President-elect Warren G. Harding visited, catapulting the resort to national acclaim. Almost a century later—and after serving as Naval officers'

quarters during World War II—the six-and-a-half-acre property has undergone a \$43 million overhaul. Vacationers can now arrive in jet-set style (courtesy of direct seaplane service), unwind poolside in their own cabana, and enjoy the most exclusive collection of rums in Key West. Then it's off to catch the sunset while relishing a toes-in-the-sand fine dining experience at the sister resort, the Reach. *1500 Reynolds St., Key West, 305-296-3535; casamarinaresort.com*

### NEW KID ON THE BLOCK: THE GATES, KEY WEST

Open for just over a year, this chic seaside hideaway is only minutes from bustling Duval Street, as well as Key West Tropical >

Privacy-loving celebs and VIPs appreciate the seclusion of Little Palm Island Resort & Spa, located on a private tropical island accessible only by boat or seaplane.



## SPACE TRAVEL

Forest & Botanical Garden. Rent a bike and head to the Ernest Hemingway Home & Museum (just three miles away) or stay put and take advantage of the on-site food truck serving Cuban-meets-Bahamian-meets-Floridian-style tapas, a poolside bar called Rum Row (which offers its own custom rum thanks to an exclusive partnership with Key West's first legal distillery), and a cigar lounge proffering local hand-rolled stogies. 3824 N. Roosevelt Blvd., Key West, 305-320-0930; [gateshotelkeywest.com](http://gateshotelkeywest.com)

### OFF THE BEATEN PATH: LITTLE PALM ISLAND RESORT & SPA, LITTLE TORCH KEY

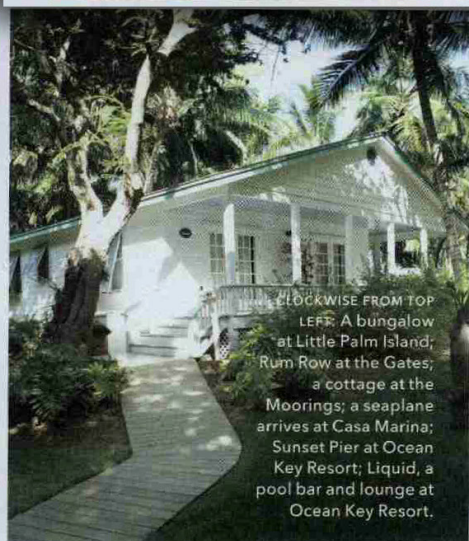
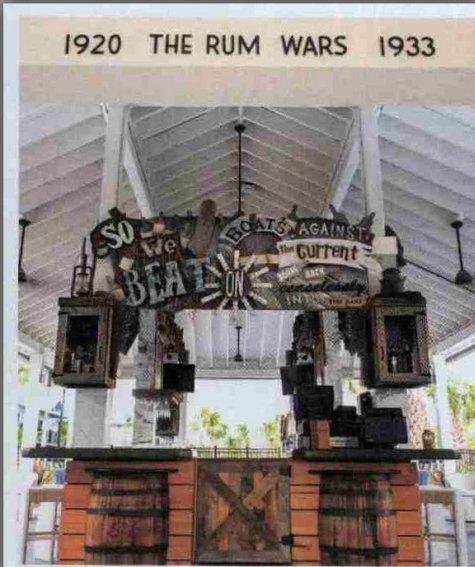
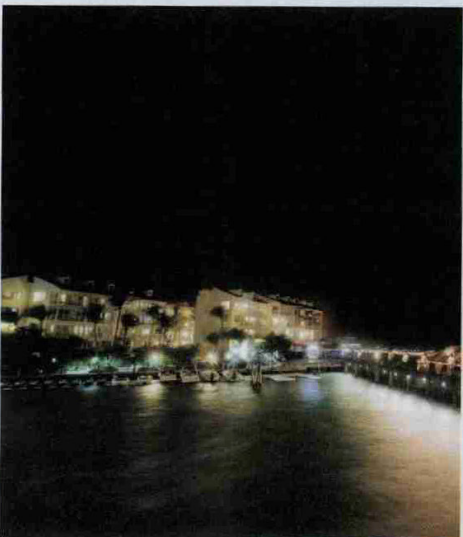
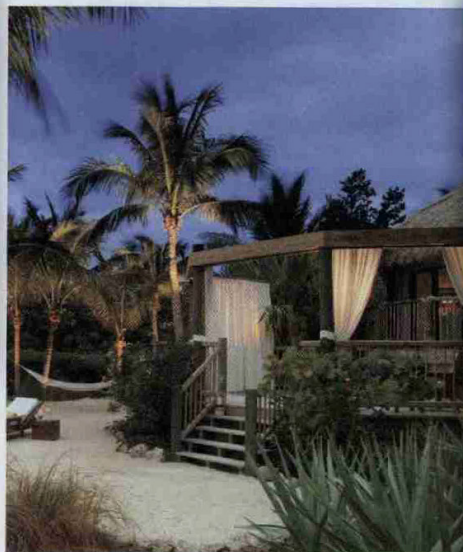
There's a reason why this large slice of paradise (accessible only via seaplane or boat) has landed on more "best of" lists than you can count. Its 5.5 acres of palm tree-enveloped grounds feel like a Caribbean wonderland. The thatched-roof bungalows don't come with TVs, but nature provides all the entertainment you'll need. And while you're distraction-free, ask about the romantic turndown services for the ultimate pampering. 28500 Overseas Hwy., Little Torch Key, 305-872-2524; [littlepalmisland.com](http://littlepalmisland.com)

### BEST-KEPT SECRET: THE MOORINGS VILLAGE & SPA, ISLAMORADA

Every one of the 18 cottages and villas at this 18-acre tropical utopia is unique, which was the goal of windsurfing champion Hubert Baudoin. After his board took a hit, he swam through crystalline water to the shore, where he had a vision of turning a broken-down motel into the resort it is today. (If the beach looks familiar, you may have seen it on Netflix's *Bloodline*.) Pro tip: Visit during a full moon, when the restaurants Morada Bay and Pierre's celebrate with bonfires, an electric reggae band, and carnival performers. 123 Beach Road, Islamorada, 305-664-4708; [themooringsvillage.com](http://themooringsvillage.com)

### DUVAL DIGS: OCEAN KEY RESORT & SPA, KEY WEST

With an address like 0 Duval Street—located right at the start of the historic thoroughfare—you can expect something extraordinary from this swanky boutique resort, like gorgeous views from your private balcony, Four Diamond dining at the restaurant Hot Tin Roof (an homage to playwright and Keys frequenter Tennessee Williams), and pampering at SpaTerre. Be sure to venture off-property, though—Duval Street is where the Keys come alive after sunset. 0 Duval St., Key West, 305-296-7701; [oceankey.com](http://oceankey.com) ■



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A bungalow at Little Palm Island; Rum Row at the Gates; a cottage at the Moorings; a seaplane arrives at Casa Marina; Sunset Pier at Ocean Key Resort; Liquid, a pool bar and lounge at Ocean Key Resort.

