

BY MARITZA COSANO

THE RAY, The Perfect Staycation Spot.

Dreamy vibes, seafood platters, and flavorful citrus blends surround you at The Ray Hotel—a hop, skip, and a jump away from West Palm Beach.

It's the simple things like that first bite of the fresh-off-the-boat seafood, ice-cold fresh-squeezed juice—one part tart, another part sweet, the rhythm of live music, and the view of the setting sun between Florida's iconic palm trees and sandy beaches that let you know. . . summer is here. And this celebration can be enjoyed best at the Ray Hotel in Delray Beach.

The beach is just the beginning. But it is from there that The Ray Hotel gets its hues and charm. This upscale hotel sits tall and elegant in the trendy neighborhood of Pineapple Grove Arts District, just a five-minute walk from famous Atlantic Avenue and the Delray Beach Market, and a 19-minute drive from Mizner Park in Boca Raton. This coastal city is my American beach town stuck in "summertime" year-round.

The Ray Hotel is a four-star Curio Collection by Hilton hotel that offers a luxurious experience that this seaside town has long waited for. The hotel opened its doors last September to rave reviews. From deluxe accommodations to an elegant dinner at the Ember Grill Restaurant, serving the finest of American cuisine with its reimagined classics thoughtfully paired with craft cocktails, to the Rosewater Rooftop Restaurant, a

casual lunch setting near the sprawling pool/bar area, to the Lobby Bar, where you can sip on a signature cocktail, savor light bites before an evening out, or pop in for the perfect nightcap, this hotel has an intimate allure of low-key luxury.

In a rush in the morning? Not a problem. There's room service or the Stingers Coffee Shop, where you can grab a coffee and a sweet to take along. And, leaving the best for last, Akira Back Restaurant, the area's first restaurant by a Michelin-starred chef. This multi-sensory dining experience is led by the starred chef of the same name. It offers a menu that blends modern Japanese cuisine with authentic Korean flavors, stacking up the freshest bites of the season.

Chef Akira Back, owner and executive chef of Akira Back Restaurants, has expanded his global portfolio with sixteen restaurants, including his most recent establishment situated in this hotel. His innovative Asian dishes with an American flair have landed him many accolades and garnered gleaming buzz from the press and acknowledgment from the James Beard Foundation. For those who love to eat delicious recipes and sample inventive cooking, Chef Back's dishes will definitely delight them. A signature dish here is the "AB Tuna Pizza."





This dish encapsulates the chef's culinary ethos perfectly: sexy and easy to eat, served on custom plates printed with his mother's abstract artwork. This thin crust with truffle oil dish is subtle and savory.

Other signature dishes on the menu are "Jeju Domi" and the "48 Hour Short Ribs." The latter is a twist on a dish his mother made for him when he was younger. Ribs are cooked for 48 hours at low temperature and the sauce is a traditional Galbi-jjim made from beef juice served with boiled quail egg. It was hands down my favorite dish.

Over the course of 24 hours, I made The Ray Hotel my new favorite place for staycations. New, because everything you see has been designed with that modern coastal flair, from the multi-pattern bathroom tiles in different shades of gray to the navy-blue seagrass hanging lanterns in the bedroom and extra white cotton sheets, without sacrificing Delray Beach's

old quirky details and original salty character. That's how I saw it, so simple, but so incredibly chic.

A vacationland for locals and tourists alike, I discovered, it is an attraction in its own right. The forever magic of Florida's fabled east coast, which has been painted by artists and written about by a myriad of authors, has been captured by Ray's bright colors. They have a youthful sense of play—a detail not lost on the diverse crowd that frequents the hotel. It is so beautiful. That is your first impression, and it deepens as you spend a day exploring its lobby, restaurants, and even its gym, a wellness-focused space equipped with state-of-the-art exercise equipment and personal trainers.

Though the outdoor pool provides fun for everyone, this property is a 20-minute walk from the beach where you can enjoy the shade from a beach umbrella or relax in a sun lounger. But the lush rooftop pool

Rosewater Rooftop lounge and pool embodies the essence of the Delray Beach lifestyle with touches of tropical modern luxury is evident throughout with sweeping baldachins, oversized umbrellas, trellises and pergolas married to a lush tree canopy. On the right, a signature cocktail and a delicious food at Rosewater Rooftop.



definitely gives guests at the hotel a unique urban beach experience.

In the mood for outdoor sports activities? There are free bike rides and a beach shuttle that takes you straight to the beach. There you can enjoy the day under a cool beach umbrella or relax in a sun lounger. There are also kayaks that can be rented, and so much more! Above all, there's Atlantic Avenue two blocks away, with a plethora of shopping, dining, and art galleries. Popular sports for entertainment nearby include the Coco Connections Market, Arts & Jazz on the Avenue, and the Arts Garage.

One can't-miss spot at The Rey is Rosewater Rooftop, embodying the essence of the Delray Beach lifestyle. It displays a really superb panoramic view of the city. Up here you find a magical and whimsical indoor lounge infused in the crafted design details throughout this stunning space. Oversized umbrellas, trellises, and





The Ray King Suite
overlooks Pineapple Grove. This suite offers two 65-inch TVs, one in the bedroom and one in the comfortable living room.

pergolas provide shade coverage and texture to the lounging and dining areas of Rosewater.

It's easy to have a relaxed daytime and evening time here as Rosewater offers a food menu designed for a day at the pool or a night out, including light dishes, signature cocktails, and entrees.

Two young females eating lunch at a nearby table at the Rosewater Rooftop one afternoon, helped me discover the hotel's biggest attraction. On any given day, it is not surprising to see young professionals in shorts pants, t-shirts, and flip-flops having a casual business lunch. "We got simply tired of trying to keep up with the fast pace of city life," one of them said, while the other nodded her head as she sipped on an ice-cold coconut, watermelon, and lime juice concoction. "For us, this is business as usual, and this hotel makes the difference. And of course, the food is delicious."

I concurred. If there's one must-not-miss

experience at The Ray, it's breakfast or lunch at the Rosewater Rooftop—with its bar, pool, and lounge areas, it is a place to eat, meet, and mingle.

What could you expect from a town whose population has doubled since the 1980s and has continued to rise through the decades? For those visiting The Ray Hotel, the view from its furnished balconies is spectacular.

This upscale hotel is a must-visit.

Locals can vacation here any time of year. To me, The Ray provided the weekday getaway or one-night stay I was looking for—a nice exchange for daily stresses.

If you're thinking of a trip not too far from home, which does not involve that much packing, and it is not as expensive as a trip abroad, think about The Ray. Here's some exciting news to think about. The Ray Hotel is running a special entitled, #RAYcation, "Stay Like A Local." This package includes overnight valet parking for one

car, plus a Ray Loves Locals card to get:
-\$1 drip coffee at Stingers,
-Buy-1-get-1 cocktails at Rosewater Sunday-Monday
-20% off Ember Grill Restaurant on Sunday & Monday
-10% off at One Door North, a distinctively curated beach boutique offers a little bit of everything, for everyone just one door north of The Ray.

The Curio Collection by Hilton Hotels is known for its award-winning restaurants and chic accommodations. The Ray is conveniently situated in the heart of one of the most popular vacation destinations in South Florida. With its stunning guest rooms and modern design with fine craftsmanship, this hotel is a modern hub that connects you with the splendor of the Palm Beaches.

Map out your next staycation dates today when you visit The Ray Hotel at therayhotel.com