

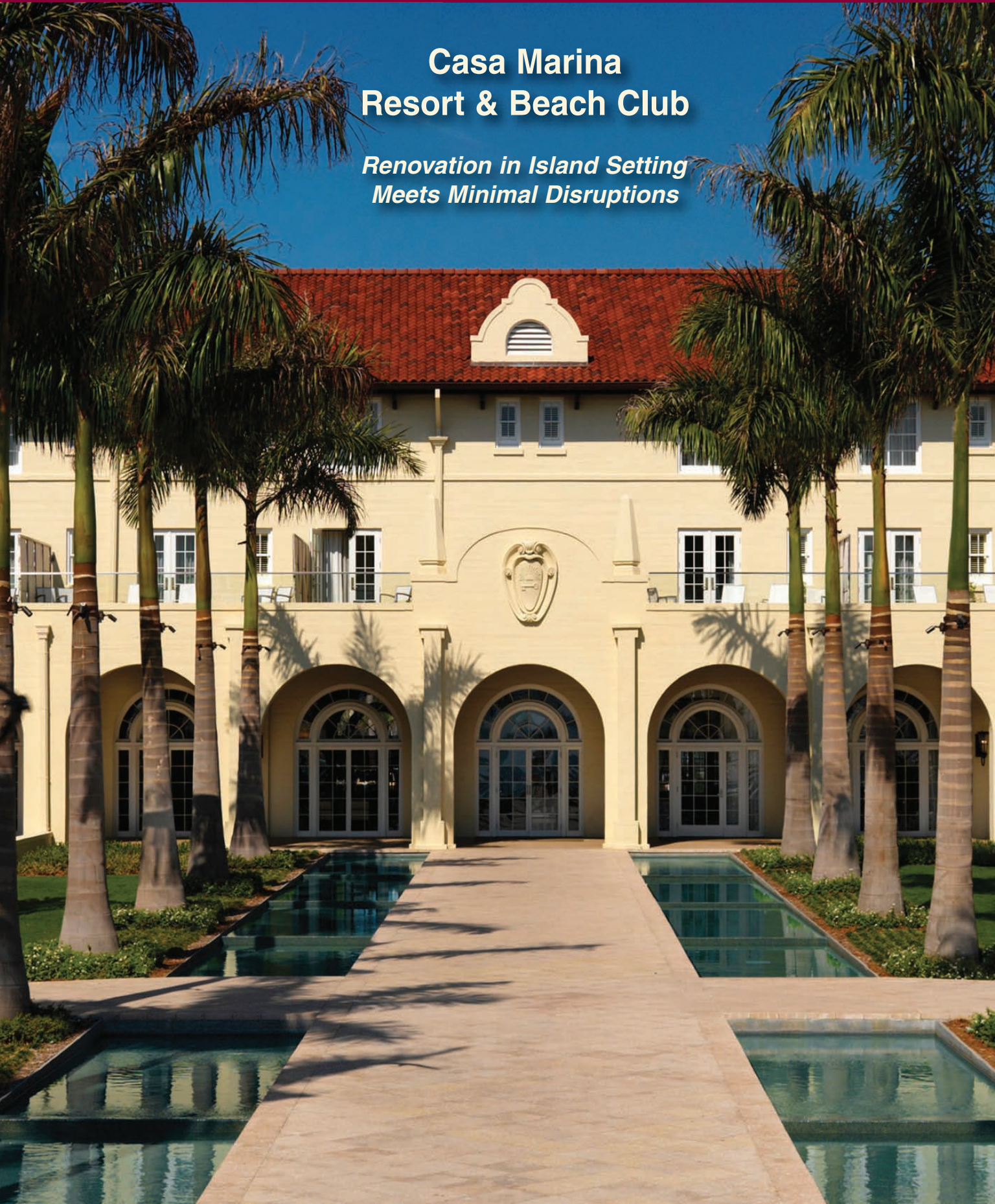


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Casa Marina Resort & Beach Club

*Renovation in Island Setting
Meets Minimal Disruptions*



Renovation in island setting meets minimal disruptions

By Nancy Watts & Charles Crabbe

When the demanding requirements of a world-class resort renovation include working in a remote location, both the owner and general contractor are faced with a unique set of challenges. **LXR Luxury Resorts & Hotels**, owner of both the **Casa Marina Resort & Beach Club** and **The Reach Resort**, developed a detailed vision to transform both Key West properties into elegant destinations for

upscale travelers and special events. Careful coordination throughout the entire project made this vision a reality with minimal disruption to resort operations.

Casa Marina Resort & Beach Club

Originally opened on New Year's Eve in 1921, the Casa Marina Hotel was the first resort in Key West and quickly became a favorite among artists, presidents

and celebrities. Besides operating as a luxury resort, Casa Marina also functioned during World War II as a military headquarters, then during the Cuban missile crisis as a command post and barracks. Following the reopening of the Casa Marina in the 1970s, a series of ownership changes — combined with building additions and renovations — meant that the essence of the property had strayed from the original intent of its founder, **Henry Morrison Flagler**.

LXR's plan to restore Casa Marina to its status as a select luxury destination was supported by well-researched, thoughtful design and an intense dedication to detail from the entire project team. In addition to the design objectives, specifications were carefully researched and implemented for coastal applications to ensure proper moisture control and hurricane safety.

Casa Marina remained operational during the comprehensive renovation, restoration and rehabilitation of the resort's 315 guest rooms, lobby, colonnade, the 2,584-sq.-ft. grand ballroom, the 3,080-sq.-ft. Flagler's ballroom, swimming pool and reflecting pools. Phased construction began in July 2006 with the first blocks of renovated rooms being turned over to the owner in February 2007.

All photos courtesy of LXR Luxury Resorts & Hotels. Photographer: Thomas Hart Shelby.



The water walk reflecting pools create an avenue to the largest private beach in Key West at Casa Marina.

The existing guest room interior walls that were built up with layers of paint and knock-down textures were demolished. New drywall was installed and completed with a new paint finish. Carpet was replaced with Italian ceramic tile, and wood flooring was either restored or replaced, creating the dramatic dark wood against light walls and furnishings look that is associated with traditional Key West style. Guest baths now feature glass-walled, walk-in showers. Hurricane-rated sliding doors were installed on all balconies, and beachside ground floor rooms were opened to loggias.

The look of the original exposed beam construction was replicated in the grand ballroom and the guest rooms with the use of a fire-rated, lightweight, cast-molded product. Adherence to the design intent of the property was continued throughout the renovation of the outdoor kitchen and dining area. One of two swimming pools was demolished to make way for symmetrical reflecting pools that line the walkway to the ocean, creating a passage to the largest private beach in Key West. A new pool, surrounded by landscaping, was constructed in the beachside area.

Sometimes old ideas are new again, as seen by the resurgence of cisterns in Florida and across the southeastern United States. The original resort featured a cistern beneath the ground floor for capturing rain water. This system is functional and is used to provide irrigation to the landscaped areas of the resort. Before replacement wood flooring was installed, a liquid PVC membrane was applied to the foundation to prevent moisture migration.

The result of this effort is the world-class revitalization of an iconic property. The Casa Marina Resort & Beach Club is both classic and contemporary, capturing the allure and timelessness of his-



An aerial shot of the historic Casa Marina Resort & Beach Club, featuring more than 1,000 feet of Key West's southern shoreline.



The lobby of the Casa Marina has been finished and fully restored to traditional and timeless Key West style.

toric Key West while benefiting from the most modern furnishings and materials.

The Reach Resort in Old Town Key West

This sister property to the Casa Marina Resort & Beach Club offers guests an eclectic experience in a tropical setting. The interior of the horseshoe-shaped structure features an arrangement of catwalks that connect the guest rooms and the public areas. The Reach Resort features 150 guest rooms, which were renovated with comparable finishes and attention

to detail as Casa Marina by the same project team.

Following extensive concrete restoration of the parking garage, balconies and walkways, a Modac paint system was applied to all exterior concrete walls, providing a fresh look to the appearance of the property, as well as protecting the building from the coastal environment. The main entrance to the property was redesigned with new pavers marking the way.

All PTAC units were removed. A new central cooling fan coil unit system was installed for all guest rooms, adding comfort and con-



The Reach Resort's Caribbean-style guest rooms offer a relaxing and intimate getaway.

control for guests and increasing energy efficiency; a necessary element in modern building design and renovation. This change necessitated a design-build approach managed by the general contractor in order to incorporate the ductwork with the catwalks and guest rooms. In addition to the comfort, control and energy efficiency benefits of a new fan coil system, exterior noise was eliminated in the pool courtyard area.

Relocation of the pool and beach bar to more desirable locations and landscape modifications that opened the view from the guest rooms to the ocean were important improvements included in the makeover of this boutique Key West property.

Phased construction at The Reach Resort began in the second quarter of 2007, with the final block of guest rooms being turned back over to hotel management in January 2008. Overcoming a challenging construction schedule and meeting strict coordination requirements,

this property has undergone a transformation resulting in a true Caribbean-style treasure.

Making it happen takes teamwork

When asked about the challenges of executing the construction plan for Casa Marina and The Reach Resort, **Joe Hurst**, senior project manager for IDC Construction, replied with one word: logistics.

When working in a remote location with limited access, the overall coordination of materials and a skilled workforce is, to say the least, challenging. Delivery of domestic construction materials had to be coordinated to ensure they were on site in the necessary quantities. Many of the finish materials were imported and required international coordination efforts. The general contractor leased scarce warehouse space on a nearby key, providing a storage and staging area to support the construction process. As construction in blocks of guest rooms was completed, the GC

worked with hotel management to orchestrate owner-furnished FF&E items, which were transported from a warehouse in Miami, unloaded directly into the hotel, where installation teams were in place, ready to begin.

Due to the scale and unique requirements of Casa Marina and The Reach Resort projects, specially qualified subcontractors were brought to Key West for the duration of the construction schedule. IDC was responsible for sourcing companies to meet

the quality and schedule requirements in a location that was remote from any of their home offices.

Short- to long-term living arrangements were coordinated in Key West for all construction professionals throughout the project schedule. A variety of furnished apartment and condominium units were leased to provide housing to more than 200 skilled tradesmen and more than 20 on-site, full-time construction management and field supervision professionals.

Since completion of Casa Marina Resort & Beach Club and The Reach Resort projects, both properties have been well received by guests, the Key West community and the media. ■

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