

THE GRAND RESORT AND SPA FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

by Robert Adams



Photos Courtesy of The Grand Resort and Spa

One of the most important considerations for us when planning a trip is the type of accommodations available in our preferred destination. When it comes to visiting Fort Lauderdale, there are wonderful hotel and resort choices from small boutique hotels and large five-star resorts to clothing-optional sanctuaries for gay men.

Celebrating their 20th anniversary this year is **The Grand Resort and Spa** (539 North Birch Road, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Tel: 954-630-3000. www.grandresort.net), Fort Lauderdale's premiere gay-owned and operated men's resort and spa that first opened in 1999. We stayed here on two recent trips to Fort Lauderdale, and as soon

as we checked in we felt right at home.

As an all-male resort, the vibe is casual, chic, and totally relaxing. The clothing-optional areas are tropical and fun, and all guests seem to enjoy getting to know one another over breakfast, evening drinks, or late-night soaks in the hot tubs.

Whether you are visiting the area for business or pleasure, The Grand Resort and Spa is a great choice in terms of the amenities they provide their guests and the close proximity to the beach, just a block and a half away.

Every morning, as soon as we were up, we'd take a walk along the beach or go for a swim in the ocean. Back at The Grand Resort and Spa a light continental breakfast awaits,

or you can ask the concierge for dining recommendations in the neighborhood.

Many of the guests here will lounge by the pool in the morning before going out to explore the local attractions. On certain evenings, the resort hosts a complimentary happy hour with wine, Champagne, and snacks. This is a great opportunity to get to know the other guests from around the world.

You may or may not be surprised to learn that some of the guys you just met are going on the same gay Caribbean cruise that you're on! The local cruise terminal, Port Everglades, is one of the top three cruise ports in the world. It is home to 39 cruise ships and ten cruise lines that feature a variety of international destinations and itineraries.

For gay men planning a pre- or post-cruise stay in Fort Lauderdale, The Grand Resort and Spa is a popular choice with 33 well-appointed rooms and suites just steps from the beach and convenient to all of Fort Lauderdale's attractions and nightlife. If, like us, you appreciate the extra space and amenities that a suite provides, the choices here are sure to please.

In addition to their popular Courtyard Guest Rooms with one king or two queen beds and private bath with walk-in shower that opens onto their tropical courtyards, and the Poolside Guest Room with an oversize king bed located on the 2nd floor overlooking the pool, there is an assortment of suites.

Junior Suites are available in contemporary courtyard or poolside accommodations, with a slate and marble bath and a walk-in shower. One & Two-Bedroom Suites provide a spacious living room, dining area, kitchen with workspace, and a separate king-size bedroom and spacious slate-tiled bathroom with walk-in shower. Some suites include a private patio or balcony with outdoor showers. These are the best choices if you like to smoke, as all their accommodations are smoke-free. The property also provides outdoor smoking and non-smoking areas, so everyone can relax and enjoy themselves.

The One & Two-Bedroom Penthouses are perfect for people who are looking to spread out and enjoy their home-away-from-home together. The master suite has a king bed, and each bedroom has its own bath with walk-in shower. There is also a gourmet open kitchen with four-burner glass cooktop, microwave, and refrigerator. The Two Bedroom Penthouse also features a sleeper sofa.

For the ultimate in luxury, book The Grand Penthouse on the private, secluded third floor. An oversized great room is the perfect place to entertain guests. There is also an open kitchen featuring granite counter tops, four-burner glass cooktop, microwave, refrigerator, coffee maker, and dining bar. The great room opens to an outdoor, ocean view living room on your private sun deck with your own outdoor shower and Jacuzzi. There is a master king bedroom, a second queen bedroom, and a sleeper sofa. Being able to accommodate up to six people, this is a great choice for two couples, throuples, or a group of friends traveling together.

It is also the perfect suite for people celebrating a birthday, anniversary, or a romantic getaway. Pop the champers and



The Spa



The Grand Penthouse Outdoor Living Area



Junior Suite



toast to each other under the South Florida sky filled with twinkling stars and sensual ocean breezes.

If the opportunity of having an on-site spa appeals to you, then you've come to the right place. The Grand Resort and Spa is Fort Lauderdale's first gay resort with its own full-service day spa and hair studio. From a relaxing Swedish massage to a haircut before your night on the town, the staff here can accommodate all your needs.

They offer a variety of customized and specialty massages, facials, and wet room treatments, as well as manicures, pedicures, waxing, and hair styling. Spa Hours are Monday through Sunday, 9 A.M. to 7 P.M.

Being able to stroll out of our suite and into the spa for our appointment was truly a special experience. We chose their Organic Coconut Oil and Sugar Scrub. This treatment is perfect for dry and dull skin. The sugars release alpha hydroxyl acid to exfoliate the skin, and organic coconut oil softens and moisturizes the skin to a smooth polish. The treatment is finished with a rich moisturizer application.

If your skin is sensitive, try their Seaweed Gel Therapy. This body treatment begins with a cleansing, then the appropriate scrub is done. The massage is performed with a natural seaweed gel. It is a soothing and refreshing treatment that supports oxygenation of skin tissue. It is good for dry and mature skin.

Another choice for massage lovers is the Warm Mud Massage. They use Fango mud that is a natural detoxifier to help draw out impurities from the skin. This is a great treatment for normal to oily and congested skin.

Combine any massage with a body scrub and a facial for a relaxing half-day at the spa. One of our favorite options here is the Wellness Facial, a natural and organic skincare facial that stimulates the senses with the soothing power of natural fragrances and botanicals.

Now that you are looking and feeling your best, it's time to explore all that this diverse and welcoming LGBTQ destination has to offer. Ask the concierge at The Grand Resort and Spa for a list of things that are happening during your stay, or visit www.sunny.org/lgbtq-travel, and discover the wonderful array of culinary, cultural, and nightlife options available in Greater Fort Lauderdale. ■

