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MARCH 2012

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RITZ-CARLTON

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RESORTREPORT



The Ritz Carlton

Memorable For All The Right Reasons

Golf Writer Andy Reistetter continues his exclusive "Play-Write" series with an extended stay at the Ritz-Carlton and a few rounds of golf at the Golf Club of Amelia Island. Perhaps to some vacation travelers, Amelia Island is a hidden piece of the coastal Northeast Florida treasure map. For those in the know "putting" on the greens of the Golf Club of Amelia Island while staying at the Ritz-Carlton is the ultimate double eagle- the new generation "putting on the Ritz!" Join Reistetter as he experiences golf and luxury in one of the truly pristine areas of the Southeastern United States.

A gentleman named Ritz opened the first Ritz Hotel in London in 1905. At the time he set the "swanky standard" for a hotel with a kitchen on each floor so room-service meals could be served course by course.

Another gentleman named Jim McManemon was part of the Ritz-Carlton team that opened up the Amelia Island property over twenty years ago.

Now having come back home as the General Manager, the Jim Valvano - like natural leader and his incredibly talented team will make an impact on you the moment you walk in the front door to this oceanfront resort.

Whether you come with friends, family or by yourself, your visit to the Amelia Island Ritz-Carlton will be memorable for all the right reasons.

Creativity is the hallmark of any dynamic venture and you will find it with

the theme restaurant and lounge aptly named SALT.

Salt - the only rock people consume yet we forget how precious it is in terms of the ocean, salt marshes and cuisine.

A meal in SALT is extraordinary yet educational. Like a lot of our commercial food, common salt is stripped of everything good before it reaches our dining room tables but not at the Ritz-Carlton in Amelia Island.

The AAA Five Diamond restaurant utilizes 52 different types of natural salts from all over the world- Croatian salt from the Adriatic Sea, ancient salt from the Himalayan Mountains and BBQ infused salt derived in part from the wood of apple trees from the American Northwest.

Each signature dish is "simple elements from the earth and sea, properly seasoned and artfully prepared."



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Near the end of a six year, 55 million dollar renovation all of the Ritz Carlton facility, including the area's largest conference facilities are exquisite and unsurpassed in quality and functionality.

Open the door to your room and its new décor takes you from a dark mahogany wood floor that simulates brown reeds to a wind-swept sandy carpet to the dramatic ocean view through the floor to ceiling windows.

You will want to spend more time in the elegant marble bathrooms and lounge around in your plush bathrobe.

Once you come out of your room deciding which way to exit the lobby can be perplexing?

Does one head out to the sandy beach for relaxation or towards the sandy white bunkers of the "nearby" golf course for recreation?

"Nearby" is an understatement. As Johnny Miller would say on television it's a simple "slice" lag putt from the front door of the Ritz Carlton to the house of the Golf Club of Amelia Island.

As golfing experiences go, this one is world class, yet unique. Jacksonville native and PLAYERS champion Mark

McCumber, along golfing great "Gene the Machine" Littler designed two golfing experiences into one.

Though the fairways are wide throughout the course the first nine feels tighter with lakes and majestic live oaks defining fairways and guarding the opening to greens.

The second nine is more open as it meanders out towards the ocean through marshes.

The brilliance of the McCumber-Littler design literally peaks and speaks for itself on the strategic par-5 15th hole.

Like classic holes of the Golden Era there are important decisions to be made- risks to be analyzed and rewards to be seized.

The inviting experience culminates at a perched green complex at the closest point to the ocean on the golf course.

So close in fact you can hear the surf while you are putting. No need to hush the ocean as its rhythmic tones may improve your putting stroke.

The Golf Club of Amelia Island is a very scenic and playable course yet with challenging competitive shot values. When the World Golf Hall of Fame's Slammer & Squire course was not yet ready to go the Champions



AMELIA ISLAND, FLORIDA

Tour came here to stage their Legends of Golf tournament in 1999.

Golfing legends Charles Coody and Dale Douglas teamed up to win both the Legends (over 40 years of age) and Legendary (ages 50 to 69) while Joe Jimenez and Charlie Sifford won the Demaret Division (over 70).

Like the family atmosphere at the Ritz Carlton it is likely that you will be greeted at the turn by Director of Golf John Price just to see how you are enjoying your day.

Ask John to show you his autographed poster from the Legends event- talk about capturing golf history!

Afterwards, if you choose to hit a bucket of balls like me you may run into professional golfer Bubba Dickerson at the practice facility.

You really can't beat this golfing experience!

Or the Spa experience where afterwards you can extend the treatment as warm water is cascading down on your shoulders in the signature whirlpool.

Or the romantic beach fire near the dunes for couples complete with s'mores, hot chocolate and a warm blanket if needed.

Or the Ritz Kids programs with island adventure themes- ocean tides, native birds, sea turtles, scavenger hunts and of course sharks and pirates!

There many options though out the day for as many days as you like.

The Ritz-Carlton is synergistic with the Fernandina Beach community of Amelia Island.

Whether it's a narrated trolley tour around town with guides David and Ellen Edwards or an Amelia River tour with Captain Kevin McCarthy, educational and recreational opportunities abound.

Our trolley stopped by to visit with Billy Burbank at his manufacturing facility. Hear an inspiring American success story first hand from a "good young guy" who transformed a family





business from fishing nets to state-of-the-art sports nets.

If you sat in really good seats behind home plate at a Major League baseball game, it was Billy's nets that protected you.

Have a shrimp cocktail or fish sandwich during your visit to Amelia Island and it was Billy's nets that captured your seafood yet by an innovative design safely released any sea turtles.

Feel the wind and sudden temperature drop as Captain McCarthy swings you out a bit into the Atlantic Ocean to get an encompassing look at Fort Clinch.

On the way back see the never touched wild horses roam on the shores of Cumberland Island.

Saddle up and enjoy a horseback ride along pristine shores.

Paddle for pleasure with egrets, herons and perhaps a dolphin, manatee or sea turtle while exploring the tranquil salt marsh of the Talbot Islands State Park and Timucuan Preserve.

On land Fort Clinch comes to life with period re-enactors depicting military life in the 19th century. Hikers and bicyclists can enjoy a six mile trail with remarkable views of some of the biggest sand dunes in the state of Florida.

Amelia Island is a special destination for families, and those who visit are sure to create memories that will last a lifetime.

While convenient to reach it remains a hidden piece of the coastal Northeast Florida treasure map.

Only fifteen minutes from Interstate 95 and thirty minutes from the Jacksonville International Airport yet less than a 6-hour drive from Miami and Charlotte, 5 hours from Atlanta.

There are many special events to schedule your trip around including one within view of the Ritz-Carlton on the fairways of the Golf Club of Amelia Island.

Whether it's the highly acclaimed Shrimp Festival in April (remember Fernandina Beach is the birthplace of the modern shrimping industry) or Blues Festival in September or Jazz in October this is a place you want to come and visit to relax and to be entertained.

The upcoming Concours d'Elegance car show on March 9th through the 11th rivals the one in Pebble Beach, California as the best in the world.

The gala gathering of prestigious cars dates back to 17th Century French aristocracy parading their horse-drawn carriages in the parks of Paris and literally takes place on the 10th and 18th fairways.

From sunrise beach activities to dancing the night away in the Lobby Lounge, the Ritz-Carlton and Golf Club of Amelia Island bring "Putting on the Ritz" back into style.

Enjoy your visit and be sure to say hello to "Jimmy Mc M" for me!