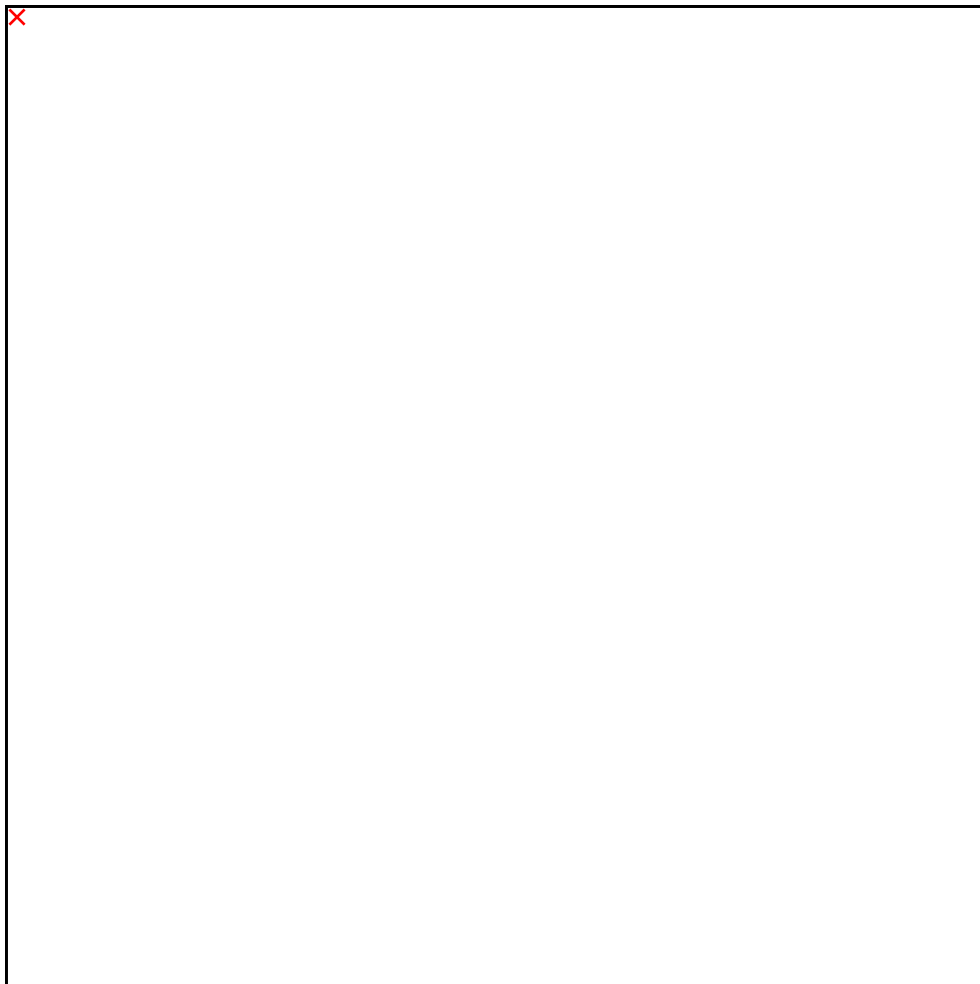


# BENCHMARK®, a Global Hospitality Company Expands Florida Portfolio

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The Woodlands (Houston), Texas, February 3, 2020...BENCHMARK®, a global hospitality company, has expanded its Florida portfolio to 11 extraordinary properties, with the addition of the spectacular Hawks Cay Resort in the Florida Keys. Set on 60 tropical acres on the secluded island of Duck Key, the property is a favorite of both leisure and business travelers. It offers 177 guestrooms and 250 private villas, five swimming pools, six restaurants, 20,000 square feet of meeting and event space, a full-service marina, saltwater lagoon, an award-winning spa, an array of watersports fishing charters, and the onsite Dolphin Connection facility. A recipient of the prestigious AAA Four Diamond Award and a member of the Preferred Hotel Group Lifestyle Collection, the resort reopened in 2018 after a \$50 million renovation. The property has joined the company's signature Benchmark Resorts & Hotels brand.

“We are delighted to expand our portfolio to the legendary Florida Keys, and to further our relationship with Watermark Capital Partners, the resort's owner,” says Benchmark CEO Alex Cabañas. Benchmark now operates 11 resort properties in the Sunshine State, under its Benchmark Resorts & Hotels and Gemstone Collection brands. “Hawks Cay Resort offers the quintessential Florida Keys experience, topnotch conference facilities, a spectacular setting and superb recreational opportunities,” he notes. Benchmark's Florida properties are located in Gainesville, Greater Miami, Orlando, St. Pete Beach, Trenton and Vero Beach.

In Hawks Cay Resort's main building, guests can choose from 177 rooms and suites, each equipped with WiFi, large flat-panel 55" LCD TVs and spacious marble showers and baths. Soft hues and tropical accents provide a chic island vibe. The collection of 250 two- and three-bedroom Hawks Cay Villas are perfect for groups and families. Most villas feature fully-equipped kitchens and oversized decks with water views.

The resort's six restaurants bring the fresh, tropical flavors of South Florida that appeal to a variety of guests, from kids and families to corporate executives. A fine dining restaurant, Sixty-One Prime, features steaks and seafood dishes. Angler & Ale serves fresh seafood, craft beer and burgers. Coral Grill, located in Coral Cay, provides quick snacks for the whole family. Oasis Cay is an adults-only dining spot at the Tranquility Pool serving island-inspired dishes and a stunning oceanfront view. The Hawks Cay Marketplace is a casual family-style restaurant with dine-in and to-go options such as salads, paninis and pizzas. Island Time, the lobby gift shop and coffee bar, features Starbucks coffee and a selection of pastries and baked goods. At the saltwater lagoon and main pool, the Tiki Grill offers cocktails, sandwiches and salads. And guests can enjoy a private dining experience in-room or seaside at the Lagoon.

The expansive resort is designed for large groups and offers the most waterfront meeting space of any resort in the Florida Keys. Hawks Cay Resort provides 20,000 square feet of meeting and banquet space accommodating up to 480 guests in the Dolphin Ballroom and 450 guests in the Overseas Ballroom. Thanks to the resort's stunning meeting space, a variety of outdoor venues and a private-event catamaran, groups need never meet in the same space twice. Hawks Cay Resort's onsite tech experts work with state-of-the-art audio, video and Internet capabilities and a dedicated event team to ensure a flawless meeting or special event. Luxury accommodations, endless activities, a romantic setting and a superb selection of venues make Hawks Cay the perfect place for a destination wedding or family reunion.

Readers of Travel + Leisure magazine voted the Calm Waters Spa among the "Top 100 Resort Spas In The World". The 7,000 square foot spa has eight treatment rooms including two couple's suites, three facial rooms and a tropical rain room with Vichy shower for body treatments. Spa treatments include natural elements from the Keys, using marine algae, sugar cane, tropical essential oils and the resort's private label of Key Lime products. The spa's fitness room offers new equipment and a complete schedule of group exercise classes, a relaxation room, candlelit whirlpool, eucalyptus steam room and dry sauna.

Situated halfway between Key Largo and Key West, and surrounded by the aquamarine waters of the Atlantic Ocean, Hawks Cay Resort offers an unequalled array of activities for every guest. Anglers enjoy offshore, flats and backcountry fishing. Watersports span diving, kayaking, kiteboarding and standup paddle boarding programs. Fishing charters and sunset cruises are available and the private, full-service marina welcomes the vessels of guests and visitors.

Hawks Cay Resort is home to the Dolphin Connection, the only resort-based program of its kind where guests can interact and swim with dolphins in their natural environment. It is also the only facility in the mainland U.S. that offers free public viewing of trained dolphins.

For tennis enthusiasts, there are eight lighted courts and an extensive program managed by a highly skilled team of Cliff Drysdale Tennis Professionals. They offer a dynamic range of clinics, mixers, camps and lessons for all ages and skill levels.

With family-friendly kids' programs, at Camp Hawk, younger guests (ages 5-12) can make a splash at the Pirate Ship Pool, complete with slides, tunnels and water shooting cannons. There's great entertainment when kids meet Captain Hawk, Priscilla the Pirate Queen and Koral the Mermaid. Camp Hawk offers organized scavenger hunts, dockside fish feedings, arts and crafts projects, interactive games, stories and more. The Camp Hawk Environmental Education Program showcases the unique Florida Keys ecosystem. Teenagers from 13 – 17 can play away at the Game Room and participate in the Camp Adventure Program. Children with developmental challenges can request a one-on-one counselor. Babysitting services are also available.

A spectacular chain of islands, atolls and coral reefs, the Florida Keys stretch 126 miles south towards Cuba – a tropical paradise between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic. Its turquoise waters teeming with marine life, set the scene for diving, fishing and boating and islands such as Key West and Islamorada offer quaint shops and art galleries. Showcased in film classics, songs and stories, the Florida Keys have captivated writers and artists from Ernest Hemingway and Tennessee Williams to Winslow Homer, Mario Sanchez, John James Audubon and singer Jimmy Buffett.

Located at mile marker 61, Hawks Cay Resort is approximately 90 miles south of the Miami International Airport and 60 miles north of Key West. Marathon is just 15 minutes south and Islamorada

is 15 minutes north, both offering shopping, dining and attractions.

### **About Hawks Cay Resort**

Hawks Cay Resort reopened in August 2018 following a \$50 million renovation. A recipient of the prestigious AAA Four Diamond Award and a member of the Preferred Hotel Group Lifestyle Collection, Hawks Cay Resort is located on Duck Key in the Middle Florida Keys. Situated roughly halfway between Key Largo and Key West at mile marker 61, this 60-acre, tropical destination is easily accessible by car, boat or plane yet feels worlds away from everyday life. Alongside the aquamarine water of the Atlantic Ocean, guests enjoy offshore, flats and backcountry fishing; diving; kayaking and standup paddle-boarding programs; Cliff Drysdale tennis program, and the only resort-based Dolphin Connection program with complimentary daily viewings in the continental U.S. The resort boasts 177 guestrooms and 250 two- and three-bedroom villas, a full-service marina, six restaurants, saltwater lagoon, five swimming pools, kid and teen clubs and the award-winning Calm Waters Spa. For more information, please visit <https://www.hawkscay.com>.

### **About BENCHMARK®, a global hospitality company.**

BENCHMARK®, a global hospitality company, is a leader in the development, management, and marketing of independent, soft branded, and experiential hard branded resorts, hotels, and conference centers. In addition to the company's award-winning full service Benchmark Resorts & Hotels, its lifestyle and luxury Gemstone Collection, and its industry-leading Benchmark Conference Centers. BENCHMARK is also an investor in etc.venues, a leading provider of contemporary city centre venues for meetings, signature events, and conferences. Benchmark's combined portfolio features more than 80 unique projects across three continents. The company is passionately committed to delivering personal, inspiring, and memory-making experiences, driving total revenue and profitability, and cultivating an award winning, "Be The Difference" culture for all its employees. Benchmark, is based in The Woodlands (Houston), Texas, with offices in London, England; Miami, Florida; Park City, Utah; Scottsdale, Arizona; New Brunswick, New Jersey; Seattle, Washington; and Tokyo, Japan. [www.benchmarkglobalhospitality.com](http://www.benchmarkglobalhospitality.com) To become a fan on Facebook, visit [www.facebook.com/BenchmarkResortsandHotels](http://www.facebook.com/BenchmarkResortsandHotels), [www.facebook.com/GemstoneHotelCollection](http://www.facebook.com/GemstoneHotelCollection). Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/BenchmarkHotels](http://www.twitter.com/BenchmarkHotels), [www.twitter.com/GemstoneHotels](http://www.twitter.com/GemstoneHotels) , on Instagram at [www.instagram.com/benchmarkresortsandhotels](http://www.instagram.com/benchmarkresortsandhotels), [www.instagram.com/gemstonehotels](http://www.instagram.com/gemstonehotels), and on Pinterest at [www.pinterest.com/benchmarkhotels/gemstone-hotels](http://www.pinterest.com/benchmarkhotels/gemstone-hotels). At LinkedIn, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/benchmark-a-global-hospitality-company/>

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