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# JACKSONVILLE

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# J TRAVEL



## Treasure Hunt

*Sleepy gulf beach town welcomes new waterside resort*

BY JOHN O'MARA

**TREASURE ISLAND IS A FLORIDA BEACH COMMUNITY** where time seems to move especially slow. Its shores are still speckled with classic one- and two-story cement block motels with names like The Thunderbird and Tropic Terrace. In fact, the only notable new vacation lodging to open its doors in the last decade is the Treasure Island Beach Resort.

Debuting earlier this spring, Treasure Island is hands-down the neighborhood's most upscale resort. Spread over five stories in a C-shaped courtyard-like arrangement, every one of its 77 rooms provides expansive views of the beach and gulf. The property has something of a South Beach feel with its subtle color palette, contemporary interior decor and retro-ish façade laced with balconies and sliding glass doors.

The large elevated pool deck is ideal for lounging away an afternoon with a good book and a frozen cocktail or two. Beach chairs and umbrellas close to the water can be rented from an outside vendor. This being the Gulf, summertime waves typically are gen-

tle and the water warm. The beach is the main draw around these parts, but attractions like the Dali Museum, Busch Gardens and Florida Aquarium are relatively close.

The resort's eatery, BRGR (get it?) serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The menu is classic American highlighted by inventive hamburgers, hand-cut fries and fresh herbs and sauces. Try the bison burger with smoked cheddar, caramelized onions, bacon jam and arugula. A ten-minute walk down the beach is Caddy's, an ultra-casual waterside bar and restaurant. Find an open picnic table on the sand and order some peel-and-eat shrimp and a rum runner. The setting sun will let you know when it's time to return to your room.

Treasure Island Beach Resort features a nicely equipped gym on the top floor. Parking, a luxury in any beach town, is complimentary and located in a ground-level garage. A one-bedroom, gulf-front suite (with a kitchenette that includes a dishwasher, stove top, microwave and toaster) starts at \$473 per night. \*

## Holy Ship!

### WORLD'S LARGEST LINER SETS SAIL THIS FALL

A short flight from Jax awaits the largest cruise ship ever built. Docked at the port of Fort Lauderdale, Royal Caribbean's 226,000-ton, 5,479-passenger **Harmony of the Seas** visits ports in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean.



No matter what country you're in though, you'll have to make time to dine, shop, and take a trip or two down one of the water slides that drop about 10 stories. Booking dates vary, but you can plan a trip leaving from Florida as early as November 5. Rates start at \$933. \*

—Shannon Greene

### Crime & Dine: Pack your magnifying glass. The Jekyll Island Club Hotel offers a **Murder Mystery Weekend Getaway**

August 19-21. Between searching for clues and mulling over impossible truths, attendees can expect a welcome reception, group meals and a finale breakfast on Sunday morning. Before anything though, we suggest using the art of deduction to choose your sleeping arrangement: \$695 for a weekend in a single bed, or \$999 for a double. [jekyllclub.com](http://jekyllclub.com) \*

—Shannon Greene

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