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## SkyBeach Resort Review

by [Katherine Rodeghier](#)

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If you drive by SkyBeach Resort on the southern tip of St. Petersburg, Florida, you might glance over and write it off as a typical “Old Florida” two-story hotel. But park and venture inside and

you'll find a resort with a host of amenities, chief among them a private beach overlooking Tampa Bay and Sunshine Skyway Bridge.



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“First impressions are ‘that ugly hotel’, then ‘oh, my god,’” said Bora Telhan, director of Operations, SkyBeach Resort. “There’s an oasis beyond the entrance.” The property has its roots in the 1950s when it truly was an old Florida hotel, actually two of them. They merged in 1962 to become Outrigger Inn.

When it became the spring training home of the St. Louis Cardinals, it set a standard for racial equality in baseball. Team owner August A. Busch, Jr. secured integrated housing at the hotel for both black and white players, a first. Baseball legends Bill White, Bob Gibson and Curt Flood stayed here. Check out the plaque off the lobby commemorating the milestone.

Willner Realty & Development Co. purchased the property in 2022. After a two-year renovation, set back by two hurricanes, it reopened in July 2024 as SkyBeach Resort. All 113 guestrooms, junior and two-bedroom suites have been open, while other renovations, including the marina and a fine-dining restaurant, opened this January.

It’s rare for a Florida resort to have a private beach, and even rarer one sporting a stage with seating on the sand. Complimentary live entertainment on weekends and Monday night movies come with the daily resort fee. Other comps include a Saturday morning yoga class, pickleball intro class, shuffleboard, and use of kayaks and paddleboards.

Two-person beach cabanas cost extra. In the swimming area, be on the lookout for jumping dolphins and pelicans dive-bombing for fish. At dusk, illuminated Sunshine Skyway Bridge

brightens the horizon. You might even see cruise ships passing underneath on their way from Port of Tampa.



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If you prefer swimming in fresh as opposed to salt water, you have your choice of two pools, one with a hot tub and adults-only hours, set in a courtyard studded with stately palms and gnarled banyan trees. SkyBeach boasts 12 pickleball courts along with four courts for beach volleyball and one for tennis at its SouthSide Sports facility.

Fishermen can book nearshore, inshore and tarpon fishing charters at the resort's renovated 29-slip marina. SkyBeach plans to partner with St. Pete Coastal Cruises in the near future to offer sightseeing excursions.

Boaters and guests have another choice for dining at Luma, which overlooks the marina. The 130-seat Mediterranean restaurant currently offers dinner only, with plans to branch out to lunch and brunch. Until then, the main dining area is the two-story, open-air SkyBar + Grille overlooking the beach. Its coastal menu features Key West conch fritters, a mahi mahi wrap, tacos, four salads and, for dessert, key lime tart and margarita cheesecake. A chandelier made from two old ship wheels discovered in a storage closet during renovations hangs over the cozy circular bar.



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In the courtyard, an outpost of St. Petersburg's popular Paradeco Coffee Roasters serves breakfast and lunch. All coffee beans are roasted in house.

For meetings and events, SkyBeach Event Center's 4,227-square-foot ballroom can be divided into three smaller spaces. It also has the 1,488-square-foot Coral Cove space and a 544-square-foot lobby/function area. The 1,998-square-foot, open-air Ovation Pavilion is ideal for corporate events and social gatherings.

And then there's the beach. It's especially popular for weddings. Brides love to kick off their shoes and dance on the sand.

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<https://www.globaltravelerusa.com/skybeach-resort-review/>