

Marquesa Hotel

By Kristin Perez



Upon arrival we were treated with exemplary service, valet at check-in followed by drinks pool side. The grounds are comprised of two swimming pools replete with the tranquil notions of waterfalls surrounded by a lush landscape. Usually lush and landscape appear together like thank and you, but this was really lush. And private, even though you were less than two blocks from the headiness of Duval Street.

The history of the Marquesa is as interesting as any of the structures that pepper Key West. The original building, at the corner of Simonton Street and Fleming Street (which houses the Cafe Marquesa and what is known as the Marquesa Hotel) survived a serious fire in the late 1800s and was home to a series of businesses, including the original Fausto's grocery store from 1936 to 1949. Next door is another building added to the Marquesa stable (which now houses the lobby and nine rooms) that was once a prim boarding house in the early 1900s. By the 1970s it was a weekly retreat for some colorful characters, and was also known as 'Q-Rooms' for quiet accommodations.

In 1987, Key West builders Erik deBoer and Richard Manley purchased the building in conjunction with their revitalization efforts to preserve indigenous architecture. They began renovating extensively, removing all the debris and additions, however modern, that were not authentic. During this renovation, an additional wing was built with more rooms and service buildings. Once complete, the newly reconstructed 15-room hotel was open in early 1988.

The Marquesa received many awards for preservation (local, state and national) and by the summer of 1993, Manley-deBoer had purchased the two neighboring historic buildings and quickly transformed them into an additional 12 rooms. All

Top: The Majestic Marquesa at night. *Bottom:* View from our room.

Photos submitted by the Marquesa Hotel

Top: Private patio surrounded by the lush landscape *Below:* Room service served poolside. *Bottom:* One of the 27 suites available.



with marble baths and private patios overlooking the grounds, buffered by a waterfall incorporated into the brick-lined steps.

The gardens and landscape lighting were given special attention with the help of the Miami-based landscape architect, Raymond Jungles. The result is a dramatically lit oasis of what was effectively the former backyards of four houses on a random corner in the Keys. All at once soothing, trance-inducing and the reason you came.

After a full day on 'The Rock', as the locals call it, a night spent swimming under the stars or sipping cocktails in the covered, ceiling-fanned loggias is in order. And if not, then you can pre-order it from room service so that you are nicely prepared to make the important decision of where to dine. The only other call you will need to make is to schedule your turndown service for the room, so that you may return to a chocolate on your pillow for the sweet dreams you are sure to have.

www.marquesa.com

600 Fleming Street, Key West, Fla., 33040

305.292.1919 For Reservations call: **800.869.4631**