



Travel & Leisure  
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The everwater gazebo at Casa Morada, in Islamorada, Florida.



Owners Heide Praver Werthamer, Terry Ford, and Lauren Abrams by the pool at Casa Morada.

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**The Key to Bliss** In the small, airy reception area at Casa Morada, in the Florida Keys, guests are greeted by Charles and Ray Eames's 1948 biomorphic white molded fiberglass chaise longue, which is precisely the same chaise longue that greets guests in the Philippe Starck–designed lobby of Ian Schrager's Delano Hotel in South Beach. The presence of the iconic chaise at Casa Morada is no coincidence. After all, Lauren Abrams, Terry Ford, and Heide Praver Werthamer, the three owners of Casa Morada, put in a collective 24 years working for Schrager, learning the tricks of the hospitality trade at such hip, high-profile hotels as Morgans, Royalton, Paramount, Delano, and Mondrian.

In 2002, the trio—all blond, all blue-eyed—decided to strike out on their own, buying a 1.7-acre property on the Gulf shore of Islamorada, on a sleepy side street next door to the late Ted Williams's waterfront house. You know you have arrived when you see the towering pylons, three massive concrete slabs painted brilliant shades of magenta, peach, and rust that face Madeira Street and instantly recall, at least to architectural cognoscenti, the work of Mexican architect Luis Barragán.

Though just 90 minutes south of Miami, Casa Morada is a world away from the hustle of Ocean Drive. It is also a world away from the take-a-number anonymity of large resort hotels, and from the dubious charms of the faded motels dotting U.S. 1 throughout the Keys. The place is tranquil, as opposed to trendy—think serene, not scene. (Children under the age of 16 are not allowed.)

Casa Morada's 16 suites are located in a couple of not particularly distinguished white two-story masonry buildings constructed in the early 1950's and originally named the Sunset Inn.

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