

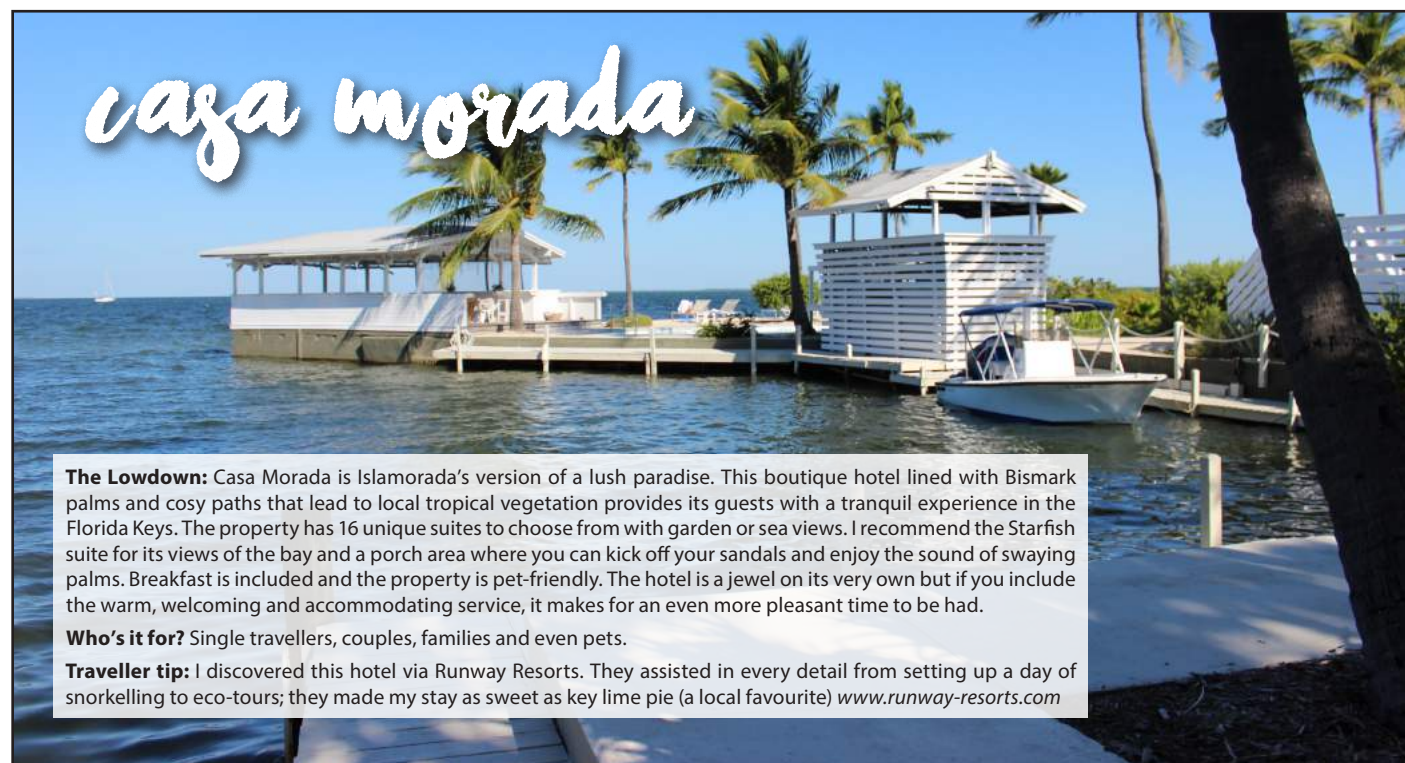
ISLAMORADA

the globetrotter's guide

Islamorada is a gem paradise comprised of six tiny clusters of islands snug in the Florida Keys. Three bodies of water surround Islamorada: the Atlantic Ocean, Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. It's located in a stretch of briny wilderness, dotted with boutique hotels and some of the world's best seafood restaurants. It is truly a haven for a relaxed, unpretentious enclave for those travellers that enjoy beautiful sunsets, secluded beaches, fine dining, and tranquil surroundings.

[The Globetrotters Guide]

Islamorada

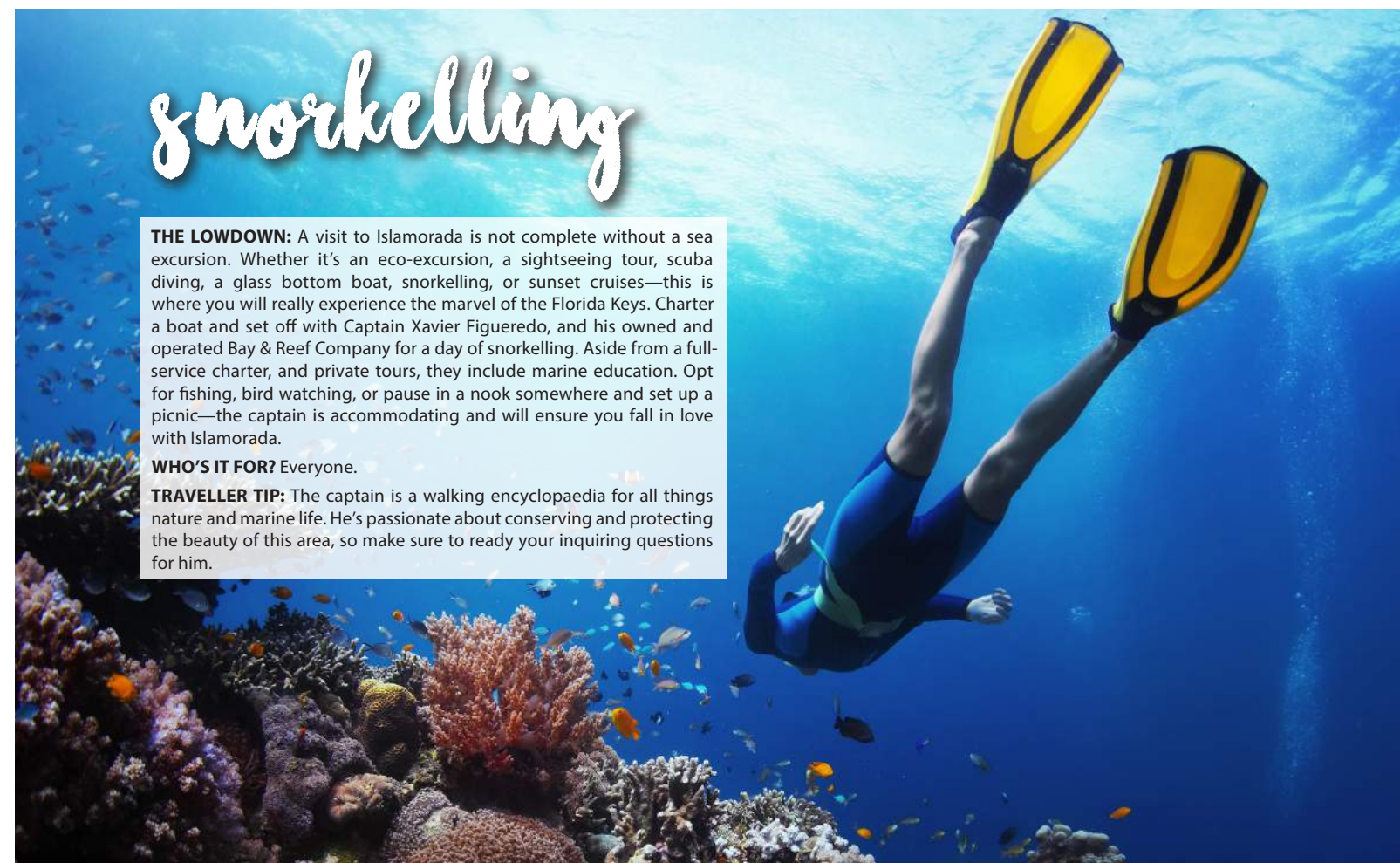


casa morada

The Lowdown: Casa Morada is Islamorada's version of a lush paradise. This boutique hotel lined with Bismark palms and cosy paths that lead to local tropical vegetation provides its guests with a tranquil experience in the Florida Keys. The property has 16 unique suites to choose from with garden or sea views. I recommend the Starfish suite for its views of the bay and a porch area where you can kick off your sandals and enjoy the sound of swaying palms. Breakfast is included and the property is pet-friendly. The hotel is a jewel on its very own but if you include the warm, welcoming and accommodating service, it makes for an even more pleasant time to be had.

Who's it for? Single travellers, couples, families and even pets.

Traveller tip: I discovered this hotel via Runway Resorts. They assisted in every detail from setting up a day of snorkelling to eco-tours; they made my stay as sweet as key lime pie (a local favourite) www.runway-resorts.com

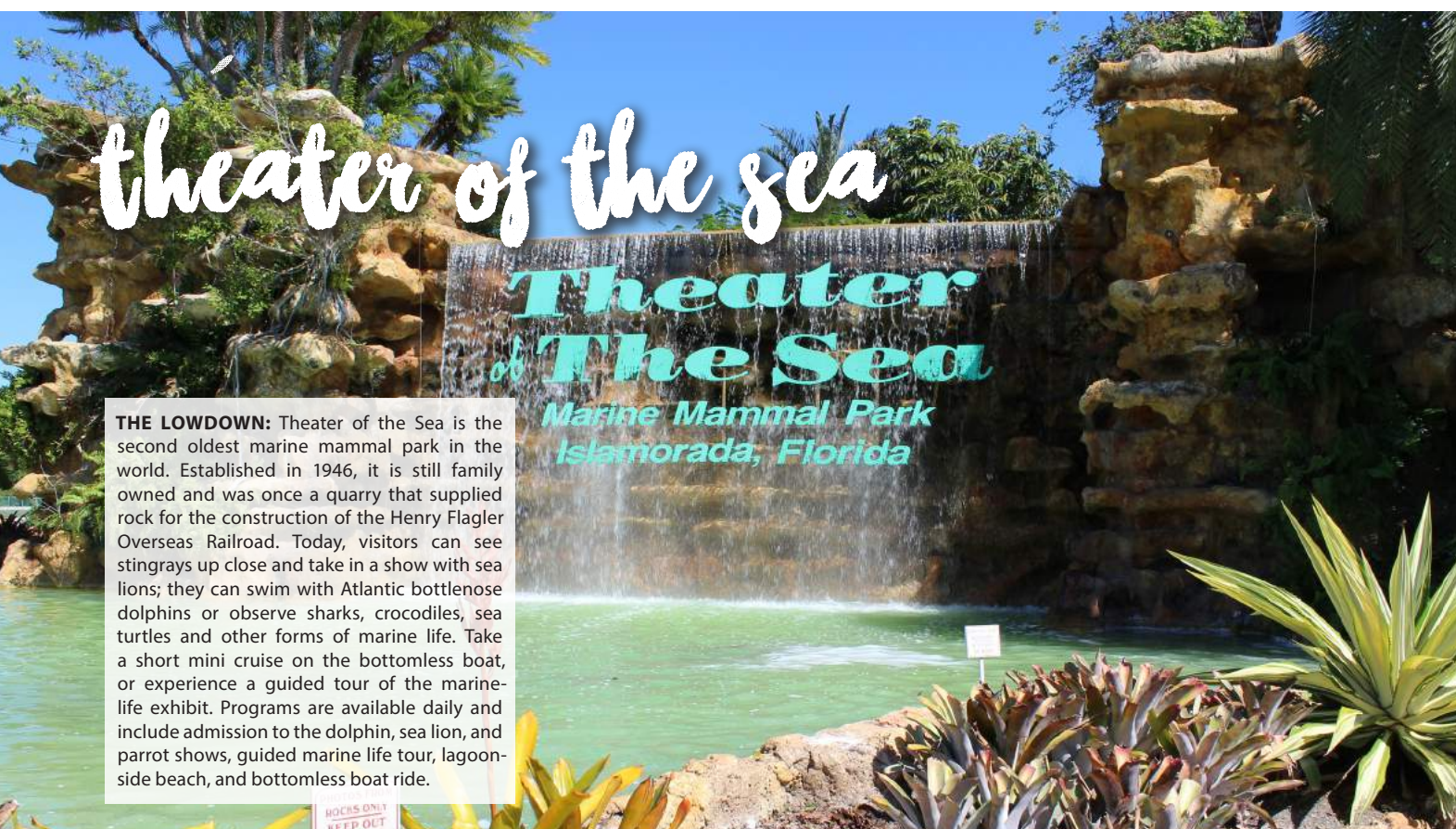


snorkelling

THE LOWDOWN: A visit to Islamorada is not complete without a sea excursion. Whether it's an eco-excursion, a sightseeing tour, scuba diving, a glass bottom boat, snorkelling, or sunset cruises—this is where you will really experience the marvel of the Florida Keys. Charter a boat and set off with Captain Xavier Figueredo, and his owned and operated Bay & Reef Company for a day of snorkelling. Aside from a full-service charter, and private tours, they include marine education. Opt for fishing, bird watching, or pause in a nook somewhere and set up a picnic—the captain is accommodating and will ensure you fall in love with Islamorada.

WHO'S IT FOR? Everyone.

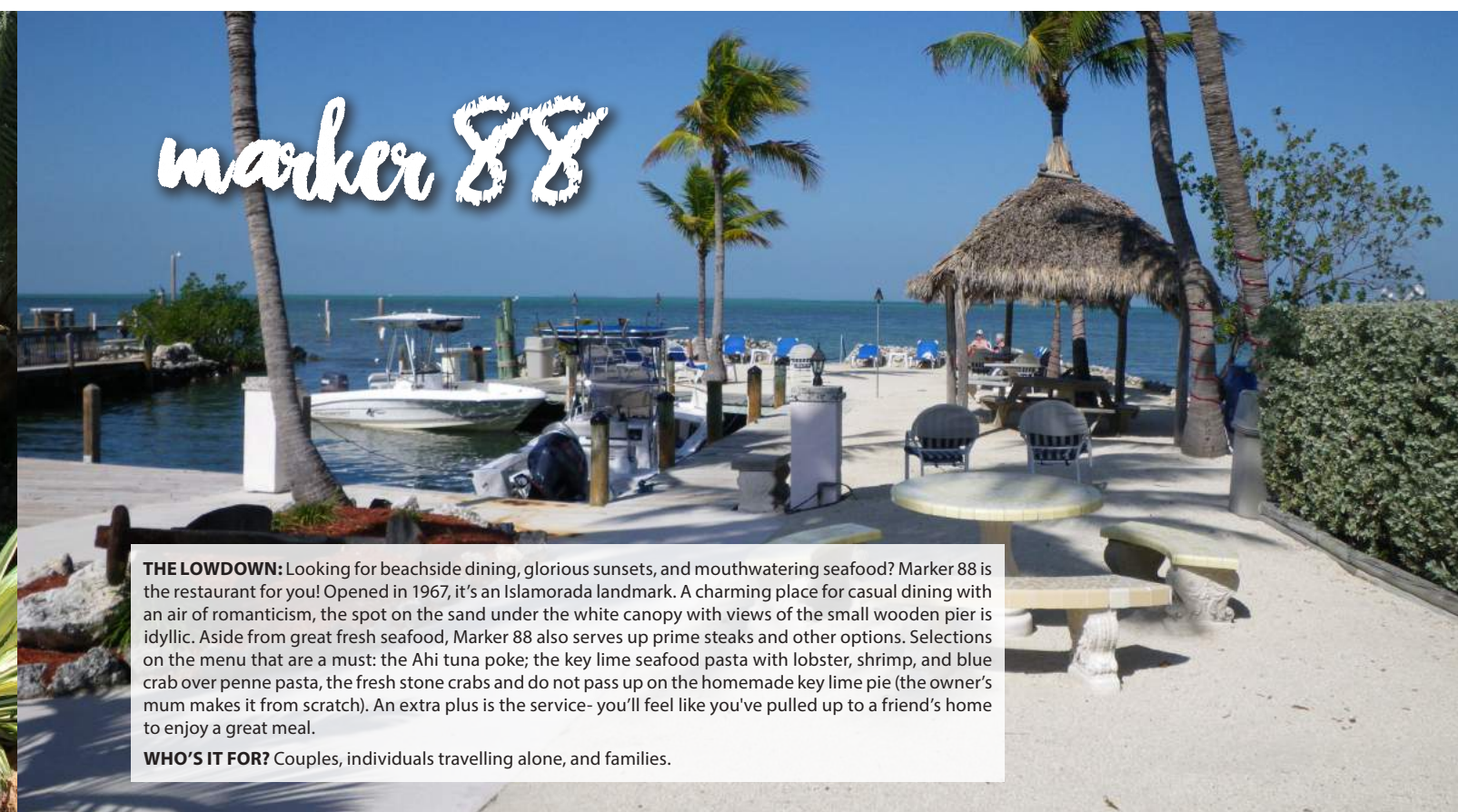
TRAVELLER TIP: The captain is a walking encyclopaedia for all things nature and marine life. He's passionate about conserving and protecting the beauty of this area, so make sure to ready your inquiring questions for him.



theater of the sea

Theater of The Sea
Marine Mammal Park
Islamorada, Florida

THE LOWDOWN: Theater of the Sea is the second oldest marine mammal park in the world. Established in 1946, it is still family owned and was once a quarry that supplied rock for the construction of the Henry Flagler Overseas Railroad. Today, visitors can see stingrays up close and take in a show with sea lions; they can swim with Atlantic bottlenose dolphins or observe sharks, crocodiles, sea turtles and other forms of marine life. Take a short mini cruise on the bottomless boat, or experience a guided tour of the marine-life exhibit. Programs are available daily and include admission to the dolphin, sea lion, and parrot shows, guided marine life tour, lagoon-side beach, and bottomless boat ride.



marker 88

THE LOWDOWN: Looking for beachside dining, glorious sunsets, and mouthwatering seafood? Marker 88 is the restaurant for you! Opened in 1967, it's an Islamorada landmark. A charming place for casual dining with an air of romanticism, the spot on the sand under the white canopy with views of the small wooden pier is idyllic. Aside from great fresh seafood, Marker 88 also serves up prime steaks and other options. Selections on the menu that are a must: the Ahi tuna poke; the key lime seafood pasta with lobster, shrimp, and blue crab over penne pasta, the fresh stone crabs and do not pass up on the homemade key lime pie (the owner's mum makes it from scratch). An extra plus is the service- you'll feel like you've pulled up to a friend's home to enjoy a great meal.

WHO'S IT FOR? Couples, individuals travelling alone, and families.