



Photos Courtesy of Biltmore Hotel

The Biltmore Hotel Miami Celebrates 95th Anniversary

Written by *Merilee Kern, MBA*

What do Oprah Winfrey, Magic Johnson, Presidents Clinton, Eisenhower and Joe Biden and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor have in common? They have all stayed at the historic Biltmore Hotel in the exclusive Coral Gables area of Miami, Florida. As the esteemed and storied property recently celebrated its 95th Anniversary—having impressively been in operation since 1926—I thought it was fine time to check in with this hospitality powerhouse that has endured decade after decade ... even weathering the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 that sent the industry at large into a tailspin.

A South Florida national historic landmark, The Biltmore Hotel features spectacular Mediterranean architecture with classic Italian, Moorish and Spanish influences over 150 acres of tropical landscape.

The recently renovated property, which is a member of Preferred Hotels and Resorts, offers 271 guest rooms, including 174 suites, ranging from junior to executive. The luxurious new rooms boast views of the hotel's unique pool and superb golf course, as well as the magnificent city skyline beyond.

Here, guests can immerse themselves in luxury and endless amenities, including a world-renowned European Spa and Salon; a spectacular swimming pool featuring private poolside cabanas; ten lighted tennis courts; the recently restored 18-hole Donald Ross Championship Golf Course (home of the Jim Mclean Golf Academy); a choice of four restaurants; and an Educational Culinary Academy.

Speaking of restaurants, The Biltmore Hotel offers various sophisticated dining experiences.



The property treats guests to myriad of award-winning culinary options in a stunning historic setting with indoor, outdoor, formal and casual dining available. The Biltmore also notably features a classic afternoon tea service accompanied by live music.

what it is offering for 2021; and plans for its future beyond. Here is what he had to say.

How did The Biltmore persevere amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020?

The Biltmore has survived the difficulties of 2020 because of the resilience of our team: our deep devotion to service, guests and the community. As well, the Coral Gables community has steadfastly supported the hotel along with our Biltmore resort members. We are a national historic landmark and we have worked to stay true to our roots as the icon of the Coral Gables.

How will The Biltmore be conducting business in 2021 to assure guest health and safety—and confidence related thereto?

The Biltmore team has innovated in the areas of health and safety with multiple items. We conducted multiple deep cleanings of the entire hotel during the COVID-19 period and we have placed hands free door openers at bathrooms. There are strict, consistent cleaning protocols throughout the property. We have used CDC guidelines and consulted with health professionals on the best methodologies to employ for physical distancing of restaurant tables, retail areas, outside areas—including the pool deck and our golf course. We are consistently checking CDC guidelines to ensure we are following up-to-date protocols.

Plus, the geo-location is outstanding. The Biltmore Hotel is situated within minutes of downtown Coral Gables and the illustrious Miracle Mile, where a large variety of renowned restaurants, boutiques and businesses are located. The hotel is also a short drive away from downtown Miami and Miami Beach, among other major area attractions.

Understanding (with hope) that travel in 2021 will kick back into gear in a big way, and with Miami enduring as a key destination for both leisure and business travelers, The Biltmore Hotel is seemingly a key area asset that can help bolster the region's tourism sector at large. This, especially amid its ability to host large corporate, conference, meeting and event groups. With all of this in mind, I connected recently with The Biltmore Hotel's Director of Marketing, Sam Francois, who was understandably eager to highlight the strength, stamina and uniqueness of this luxury resort;



What packages are you promoting for Spring and Summer 2021?

What we have found is that guests want flexibility in last minute stays. We now provide a last-minute offer where guests can get 10 percent off their stay if booking within a seven-day window. Health and wellness is a core concern, so on Mondays the Spa provides nearly 30 percent off select treatments. Biltmore members save an additional 20 percent off all of our outlets, golf and spa.

How would you sum up The Biltmore's current approach to hospitality?

Our approach to hospitality is centered on service and flexibility. We want guests staying here to enjoy the luxury, amenities and the overall area surrounding our hotel. Our staff goes through a rigorous training to ensure that they are providing unparalleled service throughout the property. When guests approach our front desk, they can be confident in knowing that they will be greeted with warmth and hospitality.

What qualities set this hotel apart from other luxury accommodation options in the Miami area?

There are not many places in Miami where you get the advantage of having a golf course, fitness center, pool, tennis courts, multiple restaurants, retail shops, cabanas, business center and conference rooms all in one location. We even have a small theater adjacent to the property that held various off-Broadway type plays. That is currently suspended now due to COVID-19 but, the point remains that all anyone can want in terms of entertainment and luxury is here.

What might people NOT know about the hotel, but should?

The Biltmore Hotel has stayed true to its design and heritage, including Mediterranean and Spanish influences. Physical changes to the hotel need to be approved by a board so, unlike other hotels, we strive to adhere to local regulations, as well as national historic



landmark specifications for our hotel. When we completed our \$35 million renovation in 2018, we modernized several aspects of the hotel, but also kept all of the original designs and specifications. So, while the rooms are new, our windows meet all code guidelines. Our common areas are revamped, but we have maintained a lot of the original influences in the design. In fact, if you look at pictures from 30 to 40 years ago, you still see similar design and architecture with hints of updates throughout.

The hotel has been a community staple for decades. What are some of the newer goals for the destination?

The newer goals for the destination include highlighting our Jim McLean Golf School. It is a world-class golf destination with extensive technical, computer-aided tools to help golf patrons. Despite the extensive room upgrades, we are constantly adding new features to our rooms. COVID-19 has made us look at ways to improve health and safety throughout the property even after the pandemic has subsided.

How will The Biltmore continue to maintain and or elevate its image?

The Biltmore maintains and elevates its image by not only staying true to its designation as a national historic landmark, but by innovating and responding to guests evolving preferences. Guests love our golf course, our technologically advanced Jim McLean Golf School, our world-class business center and conference rooms. This is coupled with numerous events planned throughout the year that not only employ social distancing and safety, but also spectacle—these speak to the strength of our brand and image.

What is your personal favorite aspect of the property?

There are so many aspects of the property that are too numerous to name. But a personal favorite is that there is never a lack of things to do. Every day there's an activity planned from spin classes, to tennis lessons, to Sunday Brunch, to lunch overlooking the golf course the list is endless. As a guest or a visitor, you can come here and never experience all that it has to offer.

Any celebrities you can publicly cite by name that have stayed at the location?

Biltmore is a staple for many politicians. Visits from the likes of Marco Rubio, Steve Bovo, Daniella Levine, Cava, model Karolina Kurkova, Luis Fonsi, NBA players and NFL players—to name a few.

With all of this, it's no surprise that The Biltmore Hotel is one of South Florida's preferred destinations for leisure and business travel, as well as the perfect location for an incredible destination wedding. I, for one, will remain eager to be on-site celebrating this historic hotel's relatively imminent Centennial.

About the Author

Forbes Business Council Member Merilee Kern, MBA is an internationally regarded brand analyst, strategist and futurist. As a prolific branding and marketplace trends pundit, Merilee reports on titans of industry: change makers, movers, shakers and innovators across all categories, both B2C and B2B. Merilee's cross-media platform work reaches an audience in the multiple millions each month through an array of broadcast TV programs, print and online publications as well as terrestrial radio.

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