

# *The Islander Way*

His name embodies a lifestyle and inspires trust—so do his resort destinations. Discover Islamorada's Islander Resort, a Guy Harvey Outpost.

"If it swims, I've caught it! How's that for a one liner?" he chuckles. His white mustache is Tom Selleck-esque, and the sparkle in his blue eyes intimates wisdom, adventure... and a bit of trouble. Sitting in his office at the Bud N' Mary's Marina in Islamorada, Florida—the walls covered with pictures of himself, friends, family, celebrities, and the fish he's caught—Richard Stanczyk captivates me with countless tales of the sea in his 50-plus years as an angler,

captain, guide, and owner of the marina. Stanczyk is a bit of a celebrity himself. He's often credited for reinventing swordfishing and once caught seven of these gladiators in a single day.

I've come to visit to talk about Guy Harvey Outpost Resorts & Lodges (GHO) and their expeditions—organized

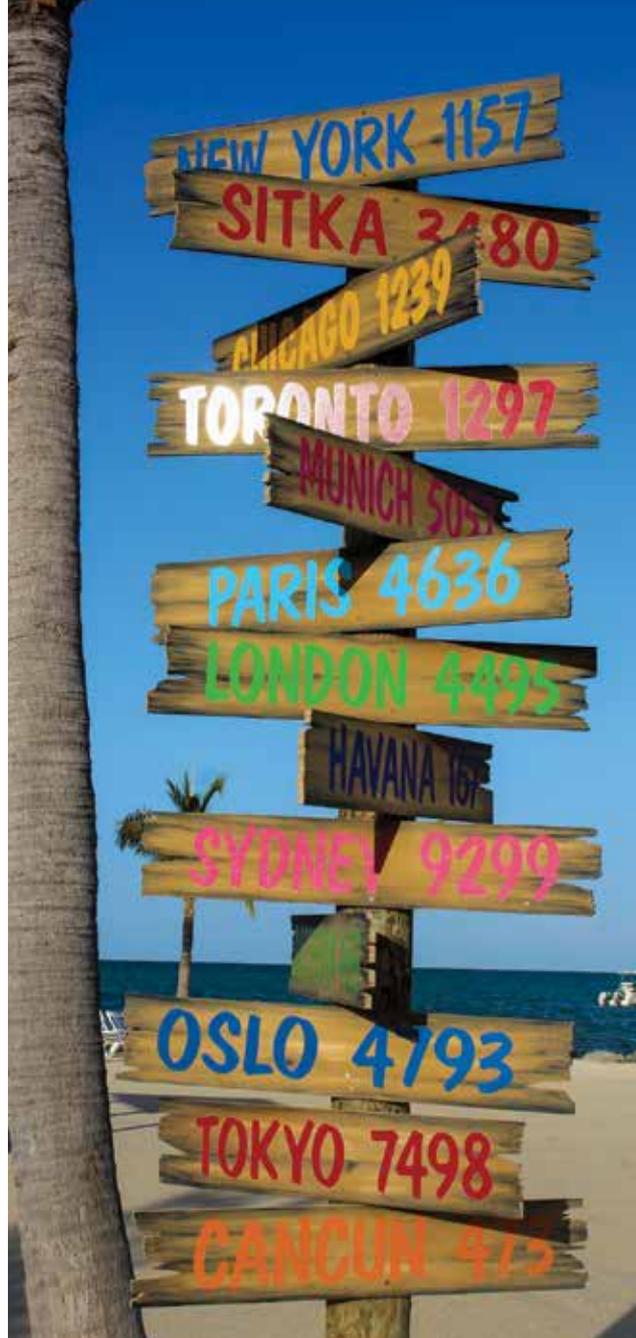
*Story & photos by Nathalie Gouillou*



*From left to right: Take off from the Islander Bayside docks for a fishing adventure or head to the sandbar for a relaxing afternoon; enjoy the view from the Bayside saltwater pool; conservation quotations accompany you throughout the resort; Guy Harvey ocean-themed décor decks the rooms; get the true character of the Florida Keys*

trips for adventure-oriented travelers. The expeditions are a new product for the brand, created “given the time poverty prevalent in everyone’s life,” says Mark Ellert, president of GHO. There’s “Mako Mexico” to follow and tag a shark off Isla Mujeres; “Panama Trifecta Safari” for a chance to tailor your experience on three fishing machines; and “Fish Daze Islamorada,” a three-day adventure with Stanczyk to battle swordfish and tarpon. (More expeditions are available and some are in the making in Central America and the Galapagos Islands.) “I’ve had the pleasure of taking Guy Harvey fishing,” Stanczyk says. “We had a stellar day. We ended up catching four of these giant swordfish.”

Guy Harvey—marine biologist, artist, diver, and conservationist—has come to embody the ocean lifestyle. Ellert saw the opportunity to create a lodging brand that would resonate with families and the salt life, and the Guy Harvey Outpost was born. Current destinations include The Bahamas; Isla Mujeres, Mexico; Dominica and Little Cayman Island in the Caribbean; and Isabela in the Galapagos—a project on the easternmost side of the island is also underway. In the U.S., GHO locations are only in Florida so far. The first was the TradeWinds Beach Resort in St. Petersburg Beach on the Gulf of Mexico. A



new spot is set to open in this fall in St. Augustine on the Atlantic Ocean. A freshwater resort with RV campground and marina on Lake Okeechobee is also planned for 2017. Then there’s the Islander Resort in Islamorada—it joined the GHO brand in 2014—with unique access to the bay and the ocean.

The Islander Resort offers two locations: on MM 82 (Oceanside) and MM 81 (Bayside). With 114 guestrooms that spread across 25 acres, the Oceanside exudes the island resort feel that one expects in the Florida Keys. Past the reception area, pristine white sand paves the way—with scattered palm trees from which hammocks hang—to rooms with a screened front porch and full kitchen. Chirping birds and conservation quotations from famous characters accompany you while the salty sea tang lures you closer



*There are water toys galore at the Islander Watersports on the beach; below: the Guy Harvey Shop at the Islander Oceanside*

to the beach. The typical Jimmy Buffet melodies hint of the two pools' proximity and Guy's Beachside Bar & Grill—Fish Daze participants get to dine with Stanczyk right here, a “truly memorable opportunity to hear Richard share some incredible fishing tales,” says Ellert. (I second that.) The restaurant will cook your catch of the day—Harvey's words on the menu remind you of ocean preservation just like in the rooms.

The Islander Watersports (IW) by the pier has water toys galore—all the GHOs do. There, Donna Warwas and her friend, Joni Taylor, are looking for fun while their husbands are out fishing on a Bud N' Mary's charter boat. “What do you have for women like us in their fifties?” Warwas, a petite brunette asks Jaime Sanders, a tan and toned IW attendant. They settle for kayaking from the Bayside (“it's calmer,” says Sanders) and a snorkeling trip to Cheeca Rocks reef, a shallow site less than five miles away. Wave runners, sailboats, aqua cycles, and three 18 to 29-foot powerboats are also available. Sanders says she sends

boaters to the sandbar right off Whale Harbor Bridge on MM 83. “It's ankle deep, the kids can snorkel and the dogs can play,” she adds. “There's also the Alligator [Reef] Lighthouse. It's only six feet deep and it's St. Thomas [U.S.V.I.]-beautiful.” She advises using Whale Harbor rather than Tea Table Channel Bridge on MM 79.1 to go from the bay to the ocean because the latter is lower. Rent a mooring ball on the Oceanside for boats up to 30 feet, or dock on the Bayside complete with 14 slips (for boats up to 24 feet), fish cleaning stations and shore power—guests must stay at one of the 25 Bayside townhomes to use a slip. There's no onsite ramp but plenty nearby, and trailers may be stored on the Oceanside property by the Florida Keys Conference Center.

The Bayside has more of a private property feel. Colorful two-story townhouses are lined up leading to the docks, the small saltwater pool and beach area. Standing aboard his flats boat, Daniel Brotzky, a husky red-haired man in his early 30s with an infectious laugh, is getting ready for





Daniel Brotzky aboard his flats boat at the docks of the Islander Bayside; plenty of deep fishing opportunities at Bud N' Mary's Marina

another relaxing outing to the sandbar. It's his first time at the Islander and he's beyond ecstatic, most likely due to his recent engagement (wedding scheduled for January 9<sup>th</sup>). "You've got everything you need—you've got your home feel with the townhome, the bay, the ocean... the markers are all right there," Brotzky says. "It's a beautiful dock with

easy access and [the slip rental] is dirt cheap!"

Back at Bud N' Mary's, Stanczyk ponders the Islander. "I have a lot of respect for the owner David [Curry]. They've maintained what I call the 'character' of the Florida Keys, and when you go to the Islander... you find their own feeling of the Keys." 



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