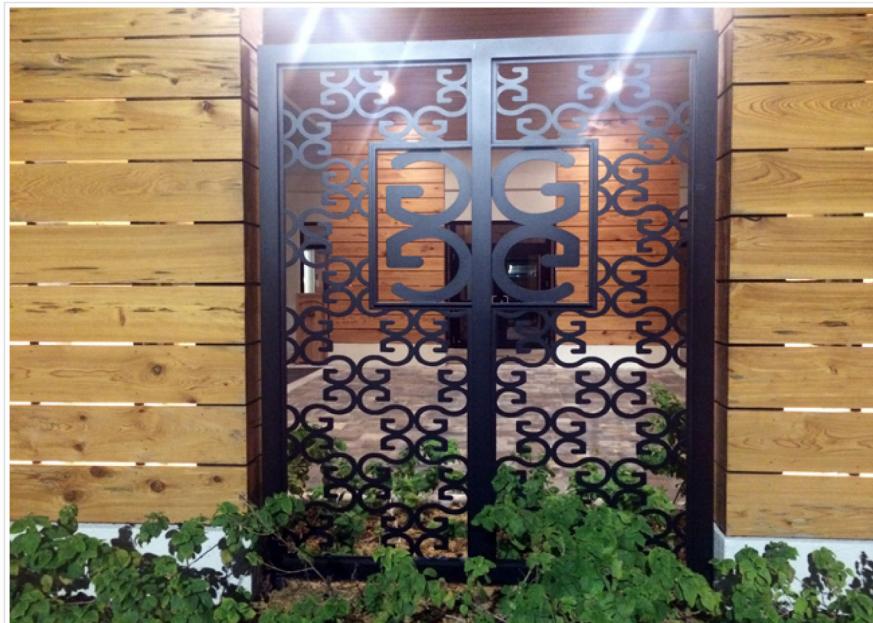


A Weekend at The Gates in Key West



Entry to The Gates.

We love to explore our own backyard, so **Recommend's** Associate Editor picked a weekend this month with some downtime, packed her bags, got into her car and headed south from [Miami](#) to Key West for a weekend visit to **The Gates Hotel**. This recently opened property is located at the entry point of Key West, and is only a 20-minute drive from Key West International Airport.



The Blind Pig food truck.

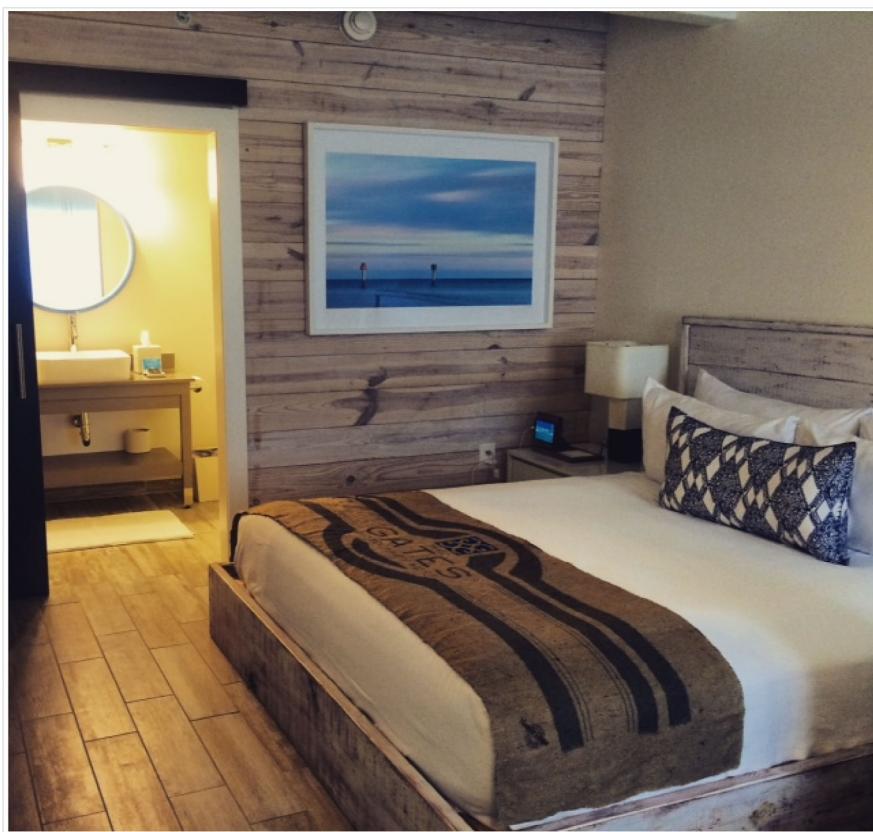
Grub Time

The Gates, located minutes away from Key West's Duval Street, has a trendy food truck on site and a bar scene with live music Thursday to Sunday. The Blind Pig food truck serves a tapas-style selection of regional Cuban, Bahamian, Caribbean and local flavors. We had a chance to sit with The Blind Pig's chef, David Fuhrman, to discuss where his inspiration for the truck came from. Fuhrman told us the original idea was to have a grill near the pool, but he wanted to try something a little different—now the food truck is his new hobby. His passion for food and his excitement with this project shows in his daily specials, which during our visit included choices such as yellow tail tacos, scallop and smoked mahi ceviche, and my personal favorite—a shrimp caprese flatbread. The Blind Pig serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Rum Row, the property's bar, is located adjacent to the pool and next to The Blind Pig. This bar, which at night lures a few locals as well as guests, gives a nod to the Prohibition era with its exclusive partnership with the local Key West First Legal Rum Distillery (more on the distillery in a minute).

Relaxing Outdoors

While outdoors, guests can enjoy a Rodriguez Cigar (sold at The Gates) at the on-property Cigar Garden—the Rodriguez Cigar Lounge Exclusivo—located near Rum Row. The pool deck is also a great option to just relax and enjoy the Florida sun, complete with three private poolside cabanas and a variety of day beds and lounge chairs.



The View king bed guestroom.

Restful Escape

Although guestrooms lack ocean views, they do showcase the island's laid-back vibe in their decor. The white-washed wooden accent wall leading to the bathroom and white-washed wooden floors complement the white linens, black wooden bathroom sliding door, and the pops of yellow and blue from the sofa's cushions. The 245-room property features *Standard* guestrooms and *View* guestrooms with views of the pool or bay—both room types are available with a king or double queen bed option. Guestrooms with a double bed feature bathrooms with a tub—perfect for those traveling with babies—and rooms with a king bed feature walk-in glass showers. Guestrooms are also equipped with complimentary WiFi and a bedside tablet that includes all of the hotel's information, as well as games and apps.



Bikes are available for guests to explore the area.

Fun in the Sun

While staying at The Gates, guests have access to bikes for riding around town, to the nearby [beach](#), or to Duval Street where they can take in the bar and music scene, as well as do a bit of shopping and dining.

And remember that local distillery we mentioned that provides the rum for Rum Row? Well, recommend your clients sign up for a tour with chef distiller Paul Menta. They won't only get a lesson in rum-making, they'll also learn a bit of local history, such as the location for the distillery was once one of the original Coca Cola factories and many Coke bottles dating back to the start of the century have been found on the property; they'll also learn some history on the Prohibition Era. After the tour, they can taste a few shots of the local rum flavors at the on-property rum tasting.

Other points to mark on your client's schedules: the daily sunset festival at Mallory Square; a cigar-rolling class with Rodriguez Cigar Factory; and snorkeling, diving, catamaran, parasailing, or deep-sea fishing excursions planned through the hotel's concierge.



A unique take on the "Do Not Disturb" sign—a magnetic sign for the guestroom door.

Note to Agents

This property opened its doors in late April, so keep in mind that a few kinks are still being worked out. Also, the second tower of the property is currently being built next door, so there's a bit of construction going on. But when that's done in October, a new restaurant, a fitness center, and new suites will be available. Oh, and for those guests who can't leave their furry friends behind, the property is pet-friendly and provides four-legged guests a Bark Box gift upon arrival. Rates start at \$249 per night. For more information, call **(305) 320-0930** or visit gateshotelkeywest.com.