



caribbean

# SAN JUAN MARRIOTT

## resort & stellaris casino

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The minute you step into the lobby of the **San Juan Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino** in Puerto Rico on a Sunday afternoon, you've entered a place of tradition within the Condado neighborhood and—depending on your age—maybe even a treasured place of familiarity.

This is the place where yesterday meets today and where the boomer-plus San Juan generation arrives dressed in their finest suits and gowns to dance to the sounds of big band music, while the younger locals meet for a night of salsa dancing, gaming and partying with friends.

"The beauty of our lobby lounge is that when customers and travel agents ask me, 'Where do the locals meet to have a good time,' I can honestly and very proudly say that our lobby lounge is the place," says Julian Cable-Treadwell, director of marketing for the San Juan Marriott. "Every night of the week has a theme, from retro nights to jazz nights to big band."

And now, this place—where locals and visitors alike go to see and be seen—is in the midst of getting even better. The new Lobby Bar, "1309," the resort's street address, will debut in September following a more than \$2 million renovation. But its elegant and unique history is safe in this new "island-inspired," chic and classically contemporary designed space, because it's being created to encourage "serenity and tranquility" and maintain its laid back Puerto Rican ambiance. At the same time, its traditions of live entertainment and people-watching, which have made the lobby bar an attraction for locals, as well as hotel guests for decades, will still be there front and center. And, while comfort zones and communal tables will add to the relaxing feel of the space, salsa will always be king and continue to rock the bar with its sensuous beat and hot dance moves.

The San Juan Marriott's ideal location on Ashford Avenue in the heart of San Juan not only makes it a happening bar locale, but also an excellent choice for Puerto Rico visitors looking to combine an exciting city stay with a laid-back beach vacation. And yes, when it's time to

step outside the doors of the San Juan Marriott, guests are surrounded with a choice of dining venues ranging from fast food to fine dining, and retail shops that highlight everything from tacky, but fun souvenirs at Walgreens, to elegant Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Cartier selections at high-end boutiques.

Without a doubt, it's the property's close proximity to the business district, shopping, dining, nightlife and the historical and cultural landmarks of San Juan that's one of its strongest sales features, says Cable-Treadwell. The property is a good choice for clients who enjoy the intimate and familiar feel of staying within a neighborhood environment and getting to know a city from walking its streets. Plus, the San Juan Marriott is only five miles from Luis Munoz Marin International Airport and minutes from historic Old San Juan.

### on the flip side

The hotel's backyard, on the other hand, is 500 ft. of Atlantic Ocean—pure bliss for beach aficionados with wide stretches of sand made for long, languid days in the sun, dutifully adorned with comfy and inviting beach chairs, towels and umbrellas. The two-level pool sits oceanside and features a swim-up bar, spiral waterslide, hot tub and children's pool area.

The onsite *Ocean Club Spa & Fitness Center*—while pretty basic in design and relegated to the lower level of the hotel—offers a chance to unwind with body wraps, body scrubs, facial treatments, footbaths, manicures, pedicures and massages. Outdoor massages in a poolside cabana can also be arranged. The gym is open 24-hours a day, and group classes include complimentary outdoor yoga and aqua aerobics. Guests can also enjoy the two lighted tennis courts.

The resort boasts leisure activities for all, and a board by the pool lists daily activities such as sand castle making, beach volleyball, family karaoke, hair braiding, salsa and Zumba classes. S'mores and an outdoor movie take place Friday and Saturday nights at 6 p.m. (weather

Opposite page: A standard king guestroom.

permitting). Better yet, a new service at the hotel allows parents to drop off children for a complimentary evening of pizza, soda and a movie in the care of child care professionals, while they enjoy a little one-on-one time at a romantic onsite restaurant.

In keeping with that leisure focus, the resort offers a range of innovative and fun packages for families, girls' getaways and romance. Starting nightly rates for packages range from \$229 to \$531, depending on inclusions which can be in-room movies and ice cream and free soda refills for kids 12 and under on the family deal, to candlelit dinners and massages for romance seekers. Valid through Dec. 31.

Bookings made through Nov. 15 qualify for San Juan Marriott's *The Big Dig* travel agent incentive program, where the top five agents producing the most room nights are invited to an all-inclusive stay for two, including air and tours. The five winners will also embark on a real treasure hunt for cash prizes totaling \$10,000 hidden within five treasure chests buried in Condado Beach's sand. Log bookings at **BigDigSanJuan.com** to qualify.

### recent renovations

The lobby renovation is the fourth major project for the 511-room beachfront property. In 2006, the 12,700-sq.-ft. Stellaris Casino was renovated and now boasts 470 slot machines, 26 game tables and casino bar. It's also smoke-free, making it a comfortable place for non-smokers to enjoy gaming, while the Wan Chai Noodle Bar is the place to go for dinner or late-night munchies while at the tables or slots.

Some \$35 million was spent on guestrooms in 2007 and another \$2 million was recently spent on renovations to the La Vista Latin Grill and the La Isla Grill and Pool Bar. Upgrades to guestrooms are all about

improving the sleep experience by adding the latest technology. Rooms boast Marriott Revive bedding with 300-thread count sheets and wireless Internet access, while muted colors create a relaxing temporary home and all rooms feature a balcony with ocean views.

The new La Vista Latin Grill looks out onto the pool and ocean and features Puerto Rican dishes and "Nuevo Latino" cuisine. La Vista Latin Grill is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Another option? Ristorante Tuscany's Northern Italian cuisine incorporates the slow-cooking techniques of Puerto Rico with delicacies include cannelloni stuffed with lobster ragout and ossobuco paired with saffron pappardelle.

Other dining choices include the Coffee Merchant & Bake Shop for fresh brew, sandwiches and homemade pastries for breakfast, lunch and dinner. La Isla Grill and Pool Bar is a good choice for a burgers, grilled chicken and light fare for lunch and dinner, as well as tropical drinks, beer and cocktails. Room service is also available.

"Product enhancements are extremely important," says general manager Hans-Georg Roehrbein. "We constantly strive to be the property of choice for visitors to San Juan and Puerto Rico, so we continuously look at ways to provide superior and consistent service in an environment that is a reflection of that. As our guests' expectations change, then we change and adapt to meet them." ■

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#### contact information

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