

Sand Script

Spring Newsletter 2008

Owners Survey Results

From Your Board of Directors

Your Board of Directors would like to thank you for taking the time to complete and return the survey that was sent to you. We received almost a 37% return rate and those returns represented almost 48% of the Owner weeks. Both Boards have used and will continue to use the information from the survey.

While it would be difficult to provide you with all the data from this survey, we decided to report on the items that seemed to be mentioned the most and provide feedback to you regarding them. This does not mean that we are not using and addressing all that we can.

POOL. There were many comments regarding the pool area, but most related to the removal of the water slide, providing Owner social gatherings poolside, and enforcement of pool rules. The IJK and FGH Owners do not own the pool. It is owned by Casa Ybel Resort Partnership and managed by Casa Hospitality Services. The removal of the water slide was not something the partnership wanted to do, but were forced to because of liability issues. Insurance to keep it was not easily obtainable and was cost prohibitive. As for Owner social gatherings, Casa Hospitality Services instituted a welcome reception but the response was poor, causing it to be discontinued. They are currently providing live weekend entertainment poolside for everyone to enjoy. Casa Hospitality Services will soon be offering a weekly event at Thistle Lodge with happy hour and dinner discounts for Owners only. More details will be provided as we draw closer to its inception. Enforcement of pool rules has always been a delicate subject. The rules are posted and all resort employees should assist in enforcing them. For any poolside issues or concerns, resort guests should seek a resort employee who may in turn locate a member of management for assistance if necessary.

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Kid's Club Rocks!

The Casa Kids Club is now featuring very popular Theme Days from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Children ages 4 to 11 are welcome. The cost is \$45 per child per day and includes a kid-friendly lunch. Theme Days include Treasure Island Day, with kiddies wearing pirate hats as they search for buried treasures, and Luau Days, with children enjoying the limbo and floral leis. Also extremely popular is "It's Your Birthday" with participants pretending it is their special day as they decorate their own cupcake surrounded by balloons. Adding an international flair is Island Fiesta Day, featuring piñatas, sombreros and maracas.

Afternoon crafts include perennial favorites of shell mirrors, shark tooth jewelry, tie-dye shirts and beach flip flops, which involves decorating their own sandals. Recreation Coordinators Paula Daly and Erin Albin keep the Kids Club a fun place to visit, as the children's parents enjoy a few hours of total relaxation on their own.


Casa Ybel
RESORT

Restaurant Happenings

The Thistle Lodge recently welcomed two new chefs to its kitchens. John A. Wolff is the Executive Chef and Jamie Crisp the Executive Banquet Chef. John served at the Sanibel Harbour Resort & Spa for nine years and Jamie cooked beside him for four years, so they have become quite a duo at providing exceptional fine dining selections. They plan to introduce new menus in the coming months.

Outside, you will see that new patio and pool bar furniture has been installed at the Thistle Lodge. Plus, cocktail service poolside is now available for guests who prefer not to walk up at the bar.

As a special treat, entertainment will now be available on weekends. If you haven't heard Danny Morgan perform, plan to enjoy some foot-stompin' tunes in the Jimmy Buffet tradition. Please check with the front desk to learn who is playing and at what time.



Resort Appoints Managers

Casa Hospitality Services, Inc. has recently appointed Froilan ("JR") Ramirez, Jr. as General Manager of Casa Ybel Resort, with responsibility for the management of the resort's wholly owned units and resort common areas including the on-site reception/reservations team, food and beverage staff, on-site housekeeping, maintenance and special event services. He also directs recreation and beach services for the resort.

The name is not new to interval owners as JR has been employed at the resort since 1995, where he began in the housekeeping department and continued his 12-year climb, serving in positions of increasing responsibility. Most recently, JR was Resort Manager and Director of Operations and Revenue Management. In his new position, he will be managing all aspects of the resort including communications with the various Boards, Owners, guests, associates and the community.

Chris Cain continues as the Interval Manager for Hilton Grand Vacations Company and the two timeshare associations at the property.

Taking over JR's position as Director of Resort Operations is Amy Speckman. This highly energetic young lady has a solid background in guest relations in the hospitality industry. Previous professional experiences included managerial positions at the Boca Raton Resort & Club and the Sanibel Harbour Resort & Spa.

Amy is a graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in Business Administration. During her hospitality career she has taught at the Educational Institute in Boca Raton and was named Manager of the year twice at the Sanibel Harbour Resort.

Sales News

Greetings from the Hilton Grand Vacations Company resales team. Rita and Mary Lou are delighted to report that sales for 2007 exceeded \$2 million! Continuing to support your sales team helps maintain the value of your vacation weeks. Also, there is a tremendous demand for weeks 7 and 8 as well as all March weeks and Christmas time. Please call Rita or Mary Lou at 239-472-1531 if you are in the market to make a purchase, list your unit for sale or if you are interested in a membership in Hilton Grand Vacations Club.



TRADING POST

There are four listings for the Trading Post.

Krista King owns week 26 in unit 224G and would like weeks 23, 24, or 25. Please call 978-618-8992 or 772-545-2254.

Mr. & Mrs. Stewart own week 34 in unit 220G and would like to trade for week 26 through week 32. Please call 845-304-1113 or 845-268-6763.

Eugene Dominique owns 184H week 22. He would like to exchange his week for either week 28 or 29. Please call 919-761-8157 or 919-280-6545.

Sally Scobey-Biggs owns 180G week 6 and would like to exchange it for week 14. Please call 616-975-1190 or 919-280-6545.

PROJECT UPDATE FROM THE INTERVAL MANAGER: Chris Cain

As mentioned in the November 2007 newsletter, there will be two major projects that could impact the vacation experience of our guests later this year. The inconveniences will likely be minor, but I want to provide you with as much information and notice as possible. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding during this extremely busy time of year.

The first project will be the repaving of the resort's driveways/parking areas as well as new curbing. Work is tentatively set to begin on September 3 and will take approximately 6 weeks to complete. However, additional work needed that was not foreseen or bad weather conditions could extend the length of this project. The timing for this project is based on the low level of occupancy at this time of year, which provides us the ability to move in-house guests' vehicles to other resort locations while the work is being done.

The second project will be the exterior painting of both the FGH and IJK buildings. The commencement time for this project is not known at this time. However, there will be painting activity prior to the September maintenance weeks in areas that will not affect our Owners or guests. There will be no building color changes, so the gray and white theme will continue. We are currently in the process of looking into building-related repairs needed prior to painting, including wood rot, storage room door replacement and lighting and signage improvements. Obviously, bad weather conditions could also be a factor in determining the length of this project.

There is a very good possibility that some Owners (who own during the maintenance weeks) will have to occupy different units or buildings as mentioned in the last newsletter. This will allow the contractor access to unoccupied sections of buildings when the maintenance weeks take place (weeks 36-39). Our goal is to avoid guest/contractor confrontations, which occurred the last time the buildings were painted. The IJK buildings will not be subject to the FGH issues mentioned in this paragraph, as each of those three buildings have individual maintenance weeks.

Additionally, the FGH Board has scheduled exterior handrail replacement on the Gulf-side of the buildings this year and the parking-lot side in 2009. This project, if approved, will take place while guests are in-house as the level of inconvenience would be relatively minimal. IJK will see the replacement of the unit living room sliding glass doors and windows. This project should be completed during the spring maintenance weeks (weeks 19-21) in May with no disruption to our Owners and guests.

We will have additional updates on the property enhancements as more information becomes available. The next newsletter is scheduled for July and will provide last-minute project details. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or your Board of Directors.

Sealed Bid Sale

The FGH Association has acquired one week due to non-payment of maintenance fees. The Board of Directors voted to place this week for sale exclusively to Casa Ybel Resort Owners through a closed bid process. Bids must be received by June 1, 2008. A minimum bid of \$4,440 has been established for unit 223G week 50. Occupancy will be for 2008 with the buyer responsible for

closing costs and the 2008 maintenance fees.

Please mail your bid to John Demos, President, sending them to Chris Cain, c/o Casa Ybel Resort, 2255 West Gulf Drive, Sanibel, FL 33957.

Please mark envelope "Closed Bid Sale." In the event of a tie, the earliest postmark will determine the successful bidder. The full amount of the sale must be paid within 30 days after the Board has accepted the bid.



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2255 West Gulf Drive
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www.thistlelodge.com



We're Good As Gold!



RCI affiliated resorts that provide an exceptional vacation experience or exemplary service and hospitality earn award designations in RCI's Resort Recognition Program (RRP). For the 15th consecutive year, Casa Ybel Resort was once again selected for inclusion as an RCI Gold Crown Resort. This prestigious designation is awarded to resorts that have met established standards, based on subscribing member comment card ratings in the areas of unit housekeeping, unit maintenance, resort maintenance, hospitality and check-in/check-out procedures. Thank you RCI and to all our Owners and guests who have given us high rankings for our services.

23 Years of Sanibel Vacations Keeps Us Young!

Vic and Laurie Van Drake have been vacationing at Casa Ybel for the past 23 years, initially attracted to the island and its preserves as well as the resort's amenities.

Over the years, the couple has accumulated eight interval weeks, along with another two weeks with their aunt and uncle from Michigan.

"We have been fortunate to be able to vacation here five weeks for the last three years and look forward to spending more time here upon retirement," says Vic, who is an interologist in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

"Sanibel keeps us youthful," he adds. "There are so many opportunities for exercising. We walk the beach every day, ride our bicycles, swim in the pool, and play tennis on the resort courts."

Laurie says she believes "The resort is in as good a shape today as it was the year we first purchased. Actually it is better. That provides real value for us. Chris, Astra, Mary Lou and Rita always offer outstanding service and there are never any maintenance issues."

They also believe the toll bridge helps keep the island a little more private and safe.

"Our children, ages 25 and 30, love the resort and have joined us for many years. Now they are bringing the grand children. This is a beautiful, stress-free and fun vacation destination for every age," says Vic.

Martha Stewarts Welcomed

Seasoned interval Owners know that check-in time is 3 p.m. and check-out time is 10 a.m. What they may not know is that this important procedure can be compromised when guests leave their units in an extra messy condition. When this occurs, additional housekeeping efforts – and time – are needed to prepare the unit for an incoming guest.

A normal cleanup requires about two hours, but if a unit is in bad shape, it will take much longer, leaving incoming guests (and their groceries) waiting longer to check in.

Unfortunately, we are finding more and more units left in this condition. We understand that accidents happen and can deal with most issues. But if something like this happens during your stay, please notify us at the time it occurs. Do not wait until check-out day. In emergencies, we are here to serve you. We can also provide additional housekeeping services during the week for a fee. These can be scheduled by the staff at the front desk. Please consider this your second home (which it definitely is) and treat it with that type of respect.

FGH Board of Directors

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Board Members may be contacted at the resort's website: www.casaybelresort.com or by calling the Interval Office at 239-395-1876

Important Numbers

**Hilton Grand Vacations
Owner Services**

(407) 521-3144

Mon-Fri 8 am - 7pm EST

Sat 9 am- 5pm EST • Sunday closed

Interval Office at Casa Ybel

239-395-1876 (Chris & Astra)

Mon-Fri 9 am - 5 pm EST

Fax: 239-395-2298

Sales: 239-472-1531

Rita & Mary Lou

**Casa Hospitality Services
Resort Rental Contracts**

239-472-3145

Fax: 239-472-2109

For additional resort

updates: 1-800-761-8940

www.casaybelresort.com

www.casaybelresort.hgvc.com

<http://casaybel.hgvc.com>

OWNERS SURVEY - Continued From Page One.

HOUSEKEEPING. There were numerous comments made about housekeeping. Most of those made were positive but we are trying to address as many of the negatives as possible.

One item that came up a lot was ice not being available in the units upon check-in. We are not aware of any specific law regarding the removal of ice or keeping ice from a previous occupant. Potential liability issues surrounding the contamination of left-over ice has been the deciding factor for its removal after a guest checks out. However, we are exploring the possibility of emptying the ice from the previous guest and restarting the icemaker. A sticker could be posted in the freezer stating that this has been done, but to use the new ice at your own risk. We suggest that you purchase ice prior to arrival as it will take time for the ice bin to re-fill after the unit has been cleaned.

WEDDINGS. Weddings received both positive and negative comments as well. Most of the negative responses involved concerns about noise. Casa Hospitality Services has instituted new event contracts that address the type and volume of the music as well as mandate and maintain a 10:00 pm cut off time. Incidentally, our new sliding glass doors help greatly in eliminating sound from the outdoors.

RESTAURANT. Again, there were both negative and positive comments, with most of the negative remarks about costs. Casa Hospitality Services, however, offers timeshare Owners promotional discounts guaranteeing anywhere from 10% to 100% off lunch or dinner at Thistle Lodge. You will obtain an envelope upon check-in that provides this promotional discount. Casa Hospitality Services managers are in the process of preparing additional incentives for Owners.

BEACH. Most of the beach comments had to do with the cleaning up of natural debris that washes ashore. Unfortunately, this is strictly monitored by the City of Sanibel. They choose, as I'm sure many of you know, to keep Sanibel as natural as possible. This means if the Gulf put it there, the Gulf has to take it away. In regards to the red-drift algae issue (no significant amounts have washed ashore since early June 2007), the City of Sanibel is exploring clean-up operations as well as focusing its efforts to determine the source of the problem and ways to prevent repeat occurrences. More detailed information can be found at www.sanibelh2omatters.com.

MAINTENANCE & TAX FEES. Most of these comments related to what we can do to control increases. Be assured that both Boards are doing the best possible to rein them in. However, this has been increasingly difficult because of rising costs. As Owners, you are well aware of similar increases taking place in your communities at home. We are also faced with exterior renovations of buildings that are 25-30 years of age, and like our own bodies, they need to be maintained in order to function properly. Regarding real estate taxes, Hilton Grand Vacations Company is working with the Lee County Property Appraiser's office to make sure the weekly allocations fairly represent the market value of the week. Some progress was made this year and they will continue working with the county to make it more equitable in the future.

SPA/EXERCISE FACILITY. There were many comments about having a spa / exercising facility on the property. This is another issue that is under the jurisdiction of the City of Sanibel. In the past the city has not been receptive to any additional building on the property. The Boards have been informed that Casa Hospitality Services would like to explore the possibility of having an on-site fitness facility and spa, which has been a frequent request by resort guests. In case you are not aware, the City of Sanibel recently opened a new state-of-the-art Recreation Center located at the Sanibel School. More information on this can be found on the www.mysanibel.com website.

COMMUNICATIONS. Your Boards have been working very hard to improve communication with the Owners. In the past, this has been primarily a function of the *Sandscript* newsletter (which was the most popular according to the survey), but this informational piece is only mailed out three times a year. Therefore, we established the Toll Free Information / Emergency Number (1-800-761-8940) that is updated monthly or more frequently if needed. The survey also indicated that close to 90% of you have access to the Internet at home and almost 80% indicated you would like to receive some sort of information electronically. This prompted the Board to piggy-back on the existing Casa Hospitality Services website (www.casaybelresort.com) to create the Association's official website. Board / Management contact information as well as meeting minutes, financial and pre-arrival information, newsletters etc. are all located there for you to review. The combination of these three tools should help you stay informed about what is happening at your resort. There were many interesting, informative and entertaining comments received, and we appreciated hearing from you. We strive for maintaining a beautiful resort in the middle of paradise, keeping up quality while managing costs. We want to continue hearing from you, so please contact us with any questions or concerns that you might have.

Call Ahead Conveniences



Did you know that many special items are available for ordering in advance of your visit? This includes breakfast baskets, groceries, fruit baskets, bike and beach rentals as well as other items for special celebrations, such as chocolate-covered strawberries and champagne. For the food items, simply fill out the form included with your pre-arrival letter and fax it to the resort. Please be sure to give them 72 hours to complete your request. Contact the Recreation Department at 239-472-3145, extension 1319 for details. Let us help you have a truly carefree vacation.



c/o Hilton Grand Vacations Company
1509 Periwinkle Way
Sanibel, FL 33957

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Resort Reminders

BEACH TOYS. For your convenience and the enjoyment of your children, we now provide complimentary beach toys, such as buckets and shovels for building castles in the sand! These have been generously left by previous guests and are located by the pool. Should you desire to purchase your own "building materials" for the wee ones and prefer to leave them behind for others to enjoy, you are welcome to do so. They usually take a great deal of space in luggage!

SAFES. We are happy to report that the newly installed in-room safes have been a big hit with everyone. However, many guests lock them upon their departure, causing a problem when a new guest checks in and is unable to open the safe. PLEASE leave them unlocked when you leave!

SPA RULES. Parents of youngsters are urged to be considerate of other guests by remembering that babies in diapers are not allowed in the pool or hot tub. Children under 12 should not use the spa at all. Remember, there is no lifeguard on duty and absolutely no smoking is allowed in the pool or spa. The hours of operation for the pool area are from 9 a.m. to dusk.

SHELL CLEANING. Please DO NOT clean sanddollars, seashells or any other items within the screened porches. The problem we are experiencing is that materials used to clean and preserve these items are staining the porch deck surface. Even if newspapers are put down first, the overspray from the products used are blown around and deposited on uncovered areas of the deck. You will then see an outline of sanddollars, shells or newspapers and the stickiness attracts dirt. The result is a very difficult, if not impossible, surface to clean. Please use the shell cleaning stations on-site, always remembering to use any spray products outdoors.



Yoga is quickly becoming a very popular activity for resort guests. The one-hour workout session, which involves stretching and slow movement, is conducted by Bridget of the resort's recreation department. Sessions are held every Monday at 4 p.m. and Thursday at 9:30 a.m. at a cost of \$15. Sign ups are requested 24 hours in advance. Pilates is also available upon request.