

the Jack Nicklaus-designed Ocean Course at Hammock Beach Resort, a newly renovated luxury property in Palm Coast that also has the brag-worthy title of *most oceanfront holes in Florida." The course, which has played host to PGA Tour events, was recently restored to its former glory. Groups also come for PGA-led golf instruction that is customized to their needs, whether gaining more distance with their drivers or mastering the sand. Or groups can change it up with a friendly glow in the dark putting competition with glow sticks and glow in the dark golf balls.

When they're not meeting among 50,000 sf of event space or basking in their luxe villas and suites, gallivanting on the greens, biking along the coastline, sand castle team building and guided kayak tours are sure to rejuvenate the mind, body and spirit. Attendees can paddle the backwaters of the 77,000 acres that make up the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve or go for a sightseeing tour on Ripple Effect One, the only vegetable-powered tour boat in Northeast Florida. Southwest of Hammock Beach near Orlando is the Gaylord

Palms Resort & Convention Center, an upscale property just minutes from Walt Disney World and Universal Orlando Resort. Here, a soaring glass atrium greets groups, offering the landscape of the Everglades, the cobblestone streets of St. Augustine, and the vibrancy of Key West. A bonus is how this massive resort manages to offer a customized group experience across 1,301 rooms and 115 suites and 400,000 sf of meeting space. When attendees are not getting down to business, they can hop on the only Flowrider (surfing simulator) in Orlando, tempt their palates in nine restaurants, and sooth their weary bones with customized spa treatments.

thepostoakhotel.com; seaisland.com; crconventioncenter.com; visitcostarica.com; bellagio.com; venetian.com; quebecregion.com; hammockbeach.com; marriott.com

A Foodie's Paradise

[ON LOCATION] LAUREL HERMAN

Set on 4.5 oceanfront acres in Sunny Isles Beach, Florida, Acqualina Resort & Spa is a luxury resort with 98 guest rooms, a 20,000-sf spa and spectacular indoor-outdoor spaces for meetings from 10 to 55 or events up to 130. Whether booking the great lawn, an intimate boardroom or larger Mediterranean room (both with great natural light), ocean views are everywhere. Of special note is a new lobby restaurant space for receptions and group dining for up to 126 seated. Named AQ Chop House by Il Mulino, this new venue has plenty of natural light and sports high ceilings with an Art Deco-style chandelier, handmade walnut dining tables and modern comfy seating. The restaurant is a collaboration with chef Michele Mazza of the Il Mulino New York and team and offers a menu of Italian influences, but with a Mediterranean twist like the resort itself. It also blends with the modern steakhouse concept with offerings of prime cuts and a selection of seafood you would expect in a Mediterranean-infused menu.

We experienced a special guest chef dinner with Michelin-rated chef Andrea Migliaccio of Capri Palace's restaurant in Anacapri, Italy, (one of the Mytha Hotel Anthology group of hotels) as part of an ongoing guest chef series that the Acqualina Resort & Spa is offering throughout the year. We tasted dishes such as red shrimp arrabbiata saffron risotto, handmade potato gnocchi



with seafood and crispy sea bass. All were beautifully presented and enjoyed. Of special note are the wines that were paired with the five-course dinner, all by Antinori Wineries of Italy, a 26-generation winemaking family. Many of the wines are served on the menu at AQ Chop House. We enjoyed a selection such as the Castello della Sala, Sauvignon Semillon and Conte della Vipera, to a chardonnay, pinot nero, and finally, dessert wine.

Planners can work with the resort to set up special wine tastings with the Antinori wine representative to pair with menus for their group.

acqualinaresort.com