

# TIME TO RECONNECT

With an ocean view and sunrise for the ages, Acqualina Resort & Residences in Sunny Isles Beach reawakens a desire for local travel.

BY JESSICA IDARRAGA



**WHEN YOU'VE LIVED IN** South Florida long enough, it becomes second nature to start taking its amenities, like the sun-kissed shores, the grab bag of international cultures and the array of tropical flora and fauna, for granted.

Luckily, there are spaces that put the region's charm on a high pedestal so you can't help but marvel at its beauty. Enter: Acqualina Resort & Residences.

Situated in Sunny Isles Beach right at the tip of the Atlantic Ocean, Acqualina is breathtaking. Across its 4.5 acres, the 98-room resort accentuates lush greenery and captivating ocean views with Mediterranean-inspired features worthy of its surrounding natural splendor. Despite the property's proximity to the ubiquitous trappings of urban architecture, Acqualina's design and niceties such as its two-story spa immerse guests in an otherworldly degree of luxury.

It's no wonder that the seaside spot has racked up its fair share of accolades: Just this year, *USA Today's* 10Best Readers' Choice Awards ranked Acqualina as both the No. 1 destination resort and the best waterfront hotel in the country; Its spa scored the top slot in the best stateside hotel spa category. The resort was also recently recognized by *TripAdvisor's* as the No. 1 luxury beachfront resort in the U.S. for the sixth consecutive year—and that's just the latest in a long line of prestigious nods from the likes of *Forbes Travel Guide* and *U.S. News & World Report*.

Deborah Yager Fleming, CEO and partner of the resort, attributes Acqualina's success to its unique location and regard for visitors and staff alike.

"We consider our hotel our house," Yager Fleming says, adding that part of what makes Acqualina special is the fact that the hotel is "completely open to the sea with no barriers between the building and the shoreline."

Acqualina is cognizant of the strong feelings it evokes in all who step foot there, and the property consciously tries to nurture that sensation beyond visitors' initial awe at the sights.

"We want our guests to feel as though they are staying in the home of a good friend," Yager Fleming says. "We have a set of standards that we abide by, but it's the personalization provided by the caring personalities of our team members that really goes over well with our residents and guests."

The care and curation displayed in its services and exterior extends to its displays: Thanks to a partnership with international vendor Fine Art Mia, Acqualina possesses original works by artists from Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein to Keith Haring and Jeff Koons.

As Americans weather the simultaneous storms of turbulent times and an ongoing health crisis, it's not unreasonable for people to yearn for a sense of serenity. Luckily, South Floridians don't have to look far from their own backyards to find bliss with Acqualina. ■