

Florida — Key Largo





**Hampton
Inn**

The Hampton Inn in Key Largo was my home for this vacation.



**Hampton
Inn**

**The Inn stretches all the way back from
the Overseas Highway to the Gulf shore.**



Hampton
Inn



Hampton
Inn

View from my room



**Hampton
Inn**

**The ibis are the permanent residents of the Hampton.
The rest of us are transients.**



Hampton
Inn



**Key Largo
Marina**

**Fishing charters and boat tours are a
big part of the Key Largo economy.**



Key Largo
Marina

I went on a sunset tour on *Reef Roamer* two years ago.



**Key Largo
Marina**

Pirate's Choice also offers sunset tours, but the weather's cool, there's not much seating, and the seas are choppy.



Key Largo
Marina

Hip graphics, but pass just the same.



African Queen

Key Largo attracts fans of Humphrey Bogart, who apparently starred in both 1948's *Key Largo* (with Lauren Bacall) and 1951's *African Queen* (with Katherine Hepburn).



African Queen

The allegedly restored African Queen steam boat is now here and available for canal tours.



African
Queen



THE AFRICAN QUEEN VESSEL WAS CREATED IN 1912 AND IS ON THE AMERICAN NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER. HER BOILER IS CUSTOM MADE AND HISTORICALLY CORRECT AND HER STEAM ENGINE IS FROM 1896. SHE WAS RESTORED IN 2012 AND HAS TO BE METICULOUSLY MAINTAINED IN ORDER TO PRESERVE HER.

ALL DONATIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED AND WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS HER PRESERVATION FOR GENERATIONS.



**African
Queen**

Boiler (right) and steam engine (green)



**African
Queen**

These Bogart fans are off for a 90-minute
cruise down the Port Largo Canal.



**African
Queen**

That brown appendage at the back looks suspiciously like an outboard motor backup plan. Good luck.



**Theater of
The Sea**

Theater of The Sea in Islamorada, 18 miles south of the hotel,
is one of the oldest marine mammal facilities in the world.



Theater of
The Sea

It presents a series of trained wildlife shows.



Theater of
The Sea

The star of this show is Wilbur, a sea lion.



Theater of
The Sea

Wilbur is encouraged to perform by a never-ending stream of fish rewards from his own cooler.



Theater of
The Sea

Wilbur is undoubtedly talented and well trained, but
this artificial performance isn't what I was expecting.



Theater of
The Sea

My mistake. They do call it "theater".



**Theater of
The Sea**

There aren't other marine mammals to see, though there are some parrots that haven't been returned to their hidden enclosures yet.



Theater of
The Sea



Theater of
The Sea

Same to you.



**Wild Bird
Sanctuary**

I'm hoping that the Wild Bird Sanctuary in Tavernier,
10 miles south of the hotel, will be more natural.



**Wild Bird
Sanctuary**

But we're off to a strange start. That was my rental car until this brown pelican took over.



**Wild Bird
Sanctuary**

**We'll argue about ownership later.
(He or she left later, and without leaving any souvenirs.)**



**Wild Bird
Sanctuary**

Once inside I'm concerned about the artificial enclosures, though the residents seem quite contented.



**Wild Bird
Sanctuary**

If this guy is on the outside is trying to figure out how to break in I guess life inside must not be too bad.



**Wild Bird
Sanctuary**

And anyway there are also huge natural areas ...



**Wild Bird
Sanctuary**

... with both birds and mammals.



**Wild Bird
Sanctuary**

Great Egret. Great indeed.



**Pennekamp
Reef Cruise**

I decided to take one boat trip, though it was delayed by a couple of days because of rough seas.



**Pennekamp
Reef Cruise**

**This glass bottom catamaran sails 7 miles out
into the Atlantic to explore Molasses Reef.**



**Pennekamp
Reef Cruise**

First we pass through a channel lined with mangrove swamps.



**Pennekamp
Reef Cruise**



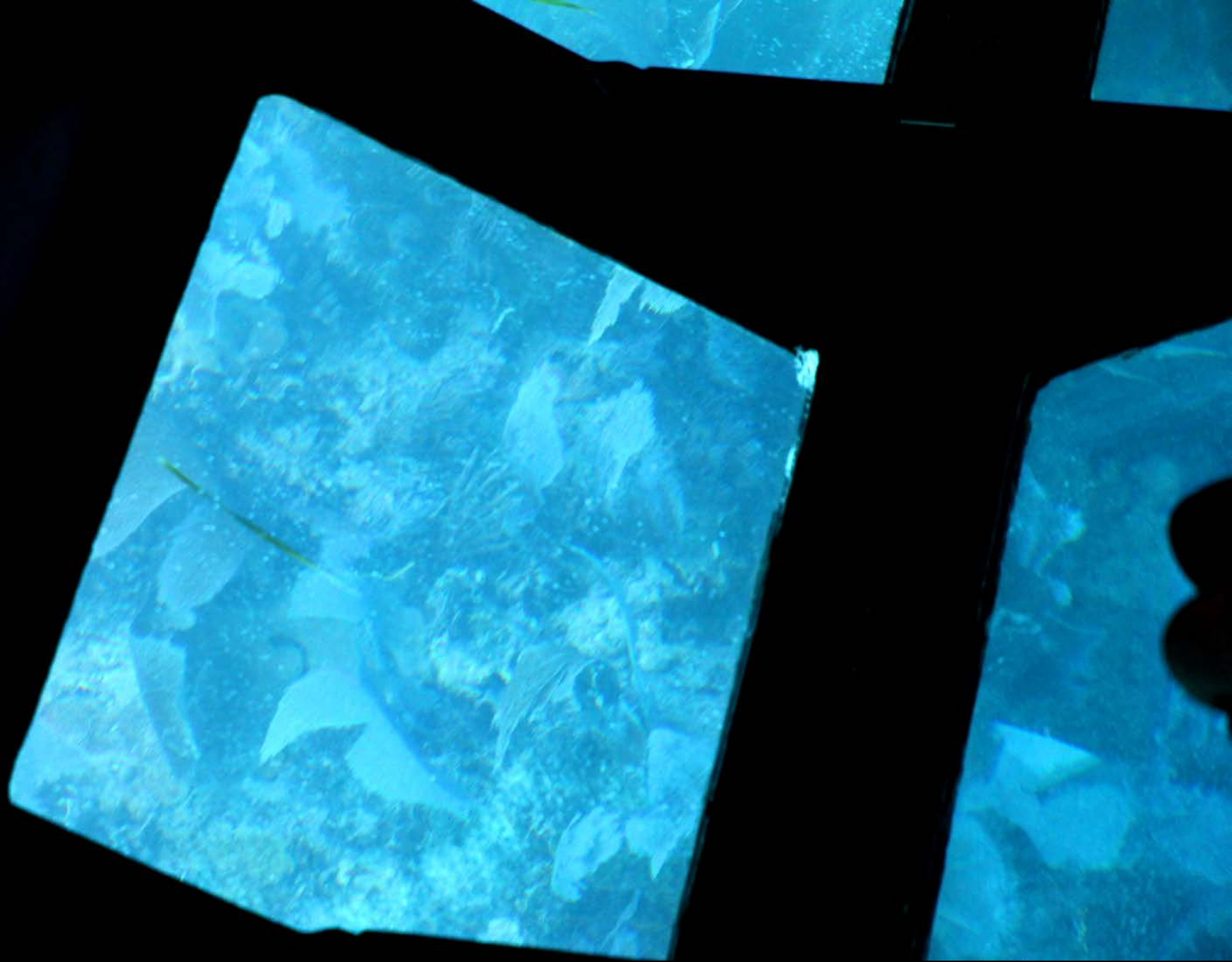
**Pennekamp
Reef Cruise**



**Pennekamp
Reef Cruise**









**Pennekamp
Reef Cruise**

Just the same the cruise was a fun excursion.



Lunch:
Island Grill

Simple pleasures. Light lunches at pretty places with nice views along the shore. The Island Grill is on the ocean side.



Lunch:
Sundowners

At Sundowners on the bay side the parasailing
entertainment comes for free.



Lunch:
Skipper's

Skippers, at the Marina del Mar, looks and feels tropical ...



Lunch:
Skippers

... and the food is great and reasonably priced.



Rides

Florida has gone for the new Mustang in a big way. They're everywhere. Most are convertibles.



**Good
Night**

The beach at the Hampton Inn is one
of the best places to see sunsets.



**Good
Night**