

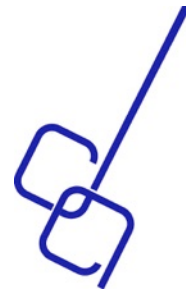
Word of Mouth : The Things We Can't Stop Talking About

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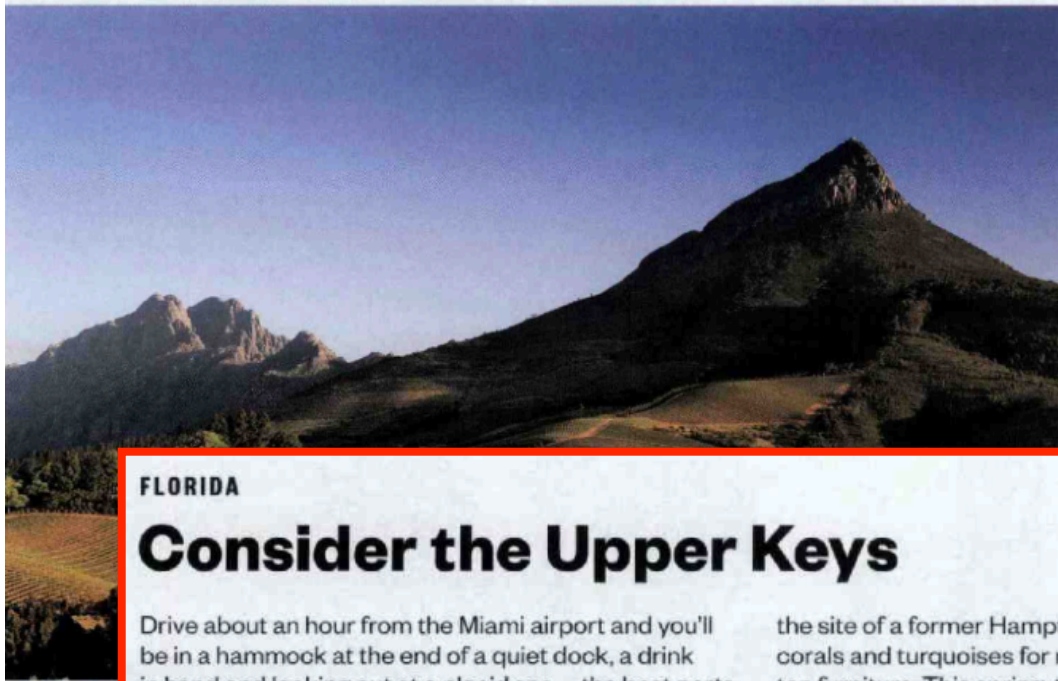


Word of Mouth

The things we can't stop talking about

An hour from Cape Town
and a world away.





Previous page:

The new Leeu House hotel in Franschhoek.

Left: The dramatic backdrop to the Delaire Graff Estate.

added nine suites in a gabled farmhouse as well as a sleek tasting room where you can sample Sprankel, the estate's

FLORIDA

Consider the Upper Keys

Drive about an hour from the Miami airport and you'll be in a hammock at the end of a quiet dock, a drink in hand and looking out at a placid sea—the best parts of the Caribbean without the worry of missing your puddle jumper or having to flash your passport. For years, Islamorada has had a handful of high-end getaways like the Moorings Village & Spa and Casa Morada, but chic mid-range options have been nonexistent. Now, smart hoteliers are filling that void with stylish properties that are just right for a long weekend. Islamorada's **Amara Cay Resort** opened last year on

the site of a former Hampton Inn, casting aside the corals and turquoises for raw driftwood and mod rattan furniture. This spring, the **Postcard Inn at Holiday Isle**, on the area's largest private beach, will reopen after a yearlong renovation. It'll keep the beloved Tiki Bar but otherwise jettison the whiff of Spring Break in favor of a maritime vibe. And this month, **Playa Largo** will open on Key Largo, the first new-build resort here in two decades. It got the same neutrals-and-naturals memo as Amara but will have beachside bungalows, tennis courts, and an impressive spa. —ANDREW SESSA

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Yes
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But
several upstart restaurants,
it's worth staying a night or two.
And did we mention the wine?

Get on the scenic Helshoogte Pass and in about a half hour you'll arrive in Franschhoek, one of the country's

pulling from contemporary South African design: latticed partitions fashioned from tea-dyed kudu leather; splashy

set against the Hottentots Holland Mountains. Nearby, the beloved farm/winery/hotel **Babylonstoren** has

Cafe, while the new food hall **De Warenmarkt** is the place to grab local charcuterie and cheeses. —SARAH KHAN

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A light-filled suite at the Amara Cay Resort.

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