

Hospitality



A Hidden Gem

An Interview with Douglas Hustad,
Managing Director, Turnberry Isle Miami



EDITORS' NOTE Douglas Hustad was appointed Turnberry Isle Miami's Managing Director in 2011. Hustad previously acted as Vice President and General Manager at the Inn on Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. He has served in various leadership positions at Ritz-Carlton properties worldwide.



Douglas Hustad

PROPERTY BRIEF Turnberry Isle Miami (www.turnberryislemiami.com) is a 300-acre Mediterranean-style resort and club located across the street from South Florida's leading shopping destination, Aventura Mall, and is situated 12 miles south of Fort Lauderdale International Airport and 18 miles north of Miami International Airport. The property offers 408 spacious guest rooms and suites, all with private balconies and terraces overlooking the resort's tropical grounds, golf courses, and pools. Unique experiences and diverse activities catered for every guest are also available: including two Raymond Floyd-redesigned championship golf courses; a 25,000-square-foot Mobil Four-Star Spa with an extensive menu and fitness center; three outdoor heated swimming pools; four restaurants and five bars including Celebrity Chef Michael Mina's Bourbon Steak; a state-of-the-art tennis center; and a 40,000-square-foot conference center. An Autograph Collection property, Turnberry Isle Miami has a reputation for excellence having most recently ranked amongst Travel + Leisure's "World's Best".

What transition has taken place at Turnberry and what is the culture that has been put in place?

The past year has provided us with an opportunity to reflect upon our rich history and legacy, and what it means for each guest to stay at Turnberry. We wanted to renew the spirit of Turnberry that has lived with the property throughout the generations via our staff, our members, their children, grandchildren, guests, and the local community. We are focused on reclaiming the iconic stature that Turnberry Isle Miami held by ensuring that each guest feels at home, every expectation is surpassed, and their experience with us is enriching, transformative, and memorable.

What are the value pillars that drive the Turnberry experience and how are you pushing them within the property?

Our value pillars are Enriching, Spirit, and Authenticity. For us, an enriching experience goes beyond flawless execution. The guests' stay should

be personal. Turnberry Isle Miami offers something for everyone. Our ability to provide guests with a lifestyle featuring the best of all worlds while making every new challenge or activity fun and enriching is a key value for us.

The spirit of Turnberry Isle Miami is one of warmth, comfort, passion, and pride, which is exemplified by our talented staff. We prepare and provide the tools for our staff to fully engage and inspire our guests during their stay. We are taking the time to listen to our guests' and members' wishes in order to ensure that our "spirit"

will speak multiple generations.

While we have continued to make updates in our programming, amenities, and services throughout the years, it is important for us to uphold Turnberry's authenticity. As we strive to maintain our long-standing reputation, we must not forget our heritage. At Turnberry, guests continue to come back year after year, generation after generation, because they like the personal, human interaction with our staff. We want to make our guests feel like they are at home again every time.

In a location with a lot of great restaurants, you have a successful food and beverage offering. Has that been a challenge?

Albeit the countless culinary options in South Florida, our guests enjoy the various dining options on property, from Cascata Grille's garden-to-table fresh ingredients to Chef Michael Mina's award-winning restaurant, Bourbon Steak. Our menu and services are diverse enough to cater to our national and global audience throughout their stay and guests enjoy taking full advantage of our seasonal menus, specialties, and consistent service standards.

How have the activities and facilities offerings set you apart?

Our 300-acre tropical playground offers a marvelous selection of activities for guests of all ages. Overlooking one of the most beautiful ribbons of shoreline in South Florida, guests have the opportunity to visit our private Beach Club featuring a heated freshwater pool and seaside grill.

The property also features the Cascata Pool, providing a tranquil, Mediterranean-style atmosphere where visitors can enjoy the tiki-like bar serving specialty frozen drinks and a menu with casual fare. Families and kids are more likely to enjoy the water and sun by the Laguna Pool that features a lazy river, a 35-foot high waterslide that gently winds around into a splash pool, and separate hot tub and toddler wading pool.

For parents that deserve a little break, we have fun and educational kids programs that cater to our younger guests, ages 4 to 12.

We offer two 18-hole championship golf courses designed by Raymond Floyd, as well as 12 tennis courts. We are also excited to introduce a new partnership with Guillermo Cañas, one of the world's best tennis players. The Cañas Tennis Academy has partnered with us and will be overseeing our tennis program, as well as providing instruction to guests.

For fitness and cycling enthusiasts, our 3,600-square-foot, state-of-the-art gym was recently renovated and we have unveiled an innovative Triathlon training program and indoor cycling experience, Tour de Turnberry.

The property is focused on the human connection. How do you balance that with the technology?

Human connection is the underlying thread that connects every activity, service, and amenity offered at Turnberry. We use technology to enhance the Turnberry experience – and the degree depends on what guests want and need to help them enjoy their stay. However, it is not the television that makes our guests return. If technology helps their stay become more relaxing and enjoyable, we'll have the right tools for that but what we offer through our staff and experiences far outweigh technology's allure.

What makes a successful managing director today?

As a managing director, I am a generalist. I hire incredibly talented people and I give them what they need for them to do their jobs well. In essence, I work for them.

It starts with the service professional – find and hire the very best. Every six months, we do a service professional survey and I look at every comment. If they are happy, they will provide engaging service, which brings guests back.

Do you need to make sure the history of Turnberry isn't lost?

Absolutely. Turnberry is an inspiration enacted by the founding Soffer family. Their passion and commitment to the property is why Turnberry exists today. Turnberry is not just a brand – it's the vision and dream of that family from the hotel to the golf course to the guests and members that inhabit the space. ●

Turnberry Isle exterior (right); Signature Soffer 18th-hole Waterfall (left)