

A Shared Commitment To Excellence

An Interview with Greg Cook, General Manager, The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island

EDITORS' NOTE Greg Cook has more than 40 years of hospitality experience. He began his career in guest-facing roles before rising through luxury hotel operations, taking on leadership roles at numerous luxury Florida hotels. Prior to joining The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island in 2020, he served as General Manager of Eden Roc Miami and The Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale. A strong advocate for environmental stewardship and community impact, Cook champions initiatives such as The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island's dolphin research program led by marine biologists, blending conservation with guest education. His commitment to service and local engagement has earned The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island the Ritz-Carlton Community Footprint Property of the Year (2025), one of two such honors he has guided properties to receive.



Greg Cook

island in Northeast Florida, where natural beauty and rich heritage meet refined luxury. Since stepping into my role in 2020, I've had the privilege of leading a comprehensive, multi-million dollar property-wide renovation that has further elevated the guest experience from refreshed accommodations to the introduction of a new expanded Spa & Wellness Center, a Nature Center, enhanced Ritz Kids programming and our fully reimaged Michelin-recommended Salt restaurant.

Our vision is to create a true sense of place, one that connects guests to the destination through immersive experiences, whether that's through wellness, culinary discovery, or environmental engagement. Every element is intentionally curated to feel both authentic and elevated.

What do you feel have been the keys to the strength and leadership of the property?

The strength of our property is rooted in our people and a shared commitment to excellence. My leadership philosophy has been

shaped by my early experiences in service roles, understanding that empowered teams who feel valued will consistently deliver exceptional results.

Equally important is our willingness to evolve. Throughout my career, from reimagining The Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale to leading transformation initiatives across multiple luxury properties, I've seen firsthand that staying relevant requires both innovation and discipline.

When teams are aligned around a clear vision and supported with the right tools, they are able to elevate the guest experience in meaningful and measurable ways.

How valuable is it for The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island to have such a strong suite product?

Today's luxury traveler is seeking space, flexibility, and personalization, and suites play an essential role in delivering that experience. Across my career, particularly during large-scale renovations and repositioning efforts, I've seen how thoughtfully designed accommodations can transform how guests engage with a property.

Will you discuss your career journey?

My journey in hospitality was inspired early on by my father's stories of international business travel which sparked a lifelong curiosity about global trends and the power of service. I began my career as a valet, where I developed a deep appreciation for guest engagement and the impact thoughtful service can have on people's lives. Those early experiences shaped my foundation and continue to influence my leadership approach today.

After a brief entrepreneurial venture in construction, I returned to the industry and had the opportunity to grow through a variety of leadership roles, including General Manager positions at Eden Roc Resort & Spa and The Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale, before I landed at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island. I led a landmark \$240 million transformation and collaborated on innovative concepts that redefined our luxury guest experiences at Eden Roc, led the reimagination of The Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale, and successfully guided significant investments and growth initiatives at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island. Each step reinforced the importance of adaptability, continuous learning, and leading with integrity, principles that guide how I support and empower our teams today.

Will you provide an overview of The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island?

The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island is defined by its unique setting on a pristine barrier



The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island



Atlantic Suite bedroom

At The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island, suites allow us to cater to multi-generational travel and extended stays while creating opportunities for highly personalized service, from curated in-room experiences to bespoke amenities. They are a key component of how we deepen guest relationships and differentiate within a competitive luxury landscape.

How has The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island approached its restaurant/food and beverage offerings?

Our approach to food and beverage is rooted in creating meaningful, memorable experiences that balance global sophistication with local authenticity. Throughout my career, I've been deeply involved in culinary concept development – from launching Burlock Coast in Fort Lauderdale to leading the reimagining of Salt here at Amelia Island. At Salt, we've elevated the experience through both design and a refined, curated menu that speaks to today's sophisticated guest. More broadly, our focus is on continuous evolution – embracing wellness-driven cuisine, immersive dining



Spa at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island



Salt at The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island

experiences, and programs that reflect changing guest preferences while maintaining the highest standards of culinary excellence.

What does luxury mean to you in today's hospitality landscape?

Luxury today is defined less by formality and more by personalization, authenticity, and emotional connection. Over the course of my career, I've seen a clear shift – guests want experiences that feel intuitive and tailored to their individual preferences. In response, we have developed signature experiences focused on active participation like nature excursions with our marine biologists, history immersions with our naturalists, personalized cooking, and mixology classes.

For us, luxury is about anticipating those needs before they are expressed, delivering

service that feels effortless yet highly intentional, and creating a genuine sense of place. It's the balance of thoughtful design, meaningful experiences, and exceptional service that defines modern luxury.

What has made the hospitality industry so special for you?

What makes hospitality so special is the opportunity to create moments that stay with people long after they leave. It is a people-driven industry at its core – every interaction has the potential to make a meaningful impact. Starting my career in an entry-level service role gave me a deep appreciation for every touchpoint in the guest journey, and that perspective has stayed with me throughout my career.

There is also a unique sense of pride that comes from working as part of a team to deliver something exceptional. Whether leading major transformations or day-to-day operations, I find the greatest fulfillment in seeing others grow and succeed while collectively delivering exceptional experiences.

What advice do you offer to young people interested in building a career in the industry?

For those considering a career in hospitality, I would encourage them to focus on building strong fundamentals like communication, adaptability, and a genuine passion for service. My own journey began in a frontline role, and those early experiences were invaluable in shaping how I lead today. Hospitality offers incredible opportunities for growth, but success requires dedication, resilience and a willingness to learn from every experience. Seek out mentors, remain curious, and embrace challenges as opportunities to develop.

Most importantly, remember that this is a people business. If you lead with empathy and a commitment to excellence, you will build a fulfilling and impactful career. The sky is the limit. ●