The Royal Palms Reinvented

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Ft. Lauderdale's premier gay guesthouse is expanding into sleek, modern boutique territory and preparing to change the face of the city's gay hotel market.

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

The Royal Palms opened in Fort Lauderdale in 1991, creating a new brand of luxury accommodations for gay getaways and helping to launch the city's international reputation as a top gay resort destination. Now, Royal Palms founder Richard Gray is raising the bar again with a major expansion and head-to-toe renovation that adds 50 rooms in two neighboring properties to the existing 12-room guesthouse and creates a new landmark among Fort Lauderdale gay hotels.

When the new Royal Palms is unveiled in January 2011, it will be the largest resort catering to gay travelers in the city – but with a decidedly different vibe. "The gay guesthouse model worked really well for many years, but it's now time for something more contemporary," says Gray, who has collected numerous awards for the Royal Palms, making it a gay Fort Lauderdale landmark. But the revamped accommodation will be light-years away from a gay bed-and-breakfast. "Our new hotel will embrace the tropical setting while showcasing a clean, modern boutique design and a European sensibility. It will be gay, but definitely heterofriendly."

If Florida travel is in your plans, get ready to indulge in the re-imagined Royal Palms — all of the decadent amenities, superior service, and luxe rooms that you love combined with a sleek, contemporary makeover that adds 53 rooms, a spa, cafe/bar, and gym. Royal Palms tops the list of places to stay for anyone hot to jump right into the gay Fort Lauderdale action, or just laze by the pool. Check out Royalpalms.com to make online reservations for Fort Lauderdale's hottest new boutique hotel!

Those who've come to love this traditionally gay resort over the years will be happy to know some things will stay the same. The original 12-room-guesthouse remains an all-male resort

that's clothing-optional around the pool and in the spa. As always, Royal Palms is close to all the action – just two blocks from world-famous Fort Lauderdale beach and a short drive to Wilton Manors, Sebastian Beach, and the Las Olas strip — all the places you want your hotel to be near.

Visitors will find crisp white exteriors, bougainvillea, and grey pavers accenting a trio of heated pools. The three buildings at this venerable Ft. Lauderdale gay guesthouse have totally remodeled guest rooms and baths styled in all white with accents of dark purple – a design nod to the fresh orchid blossoms that have welcomed guests since the Royal Palms opened. Wi-Fi will be available throughout the property and guests will have access to iPads for on-site use. The Royal Palms will accentuate the overnight experience with the addition of a gym, spa, ocean-view sun deck, full bar, and indoor/outdoor café.

"It's going to be a must-do for gay visitors, and a fresh alternative for South Florida residents," says Nicki Grossman, President/CEO of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau. "We have boutique hotels and gay guesthouses, but nothing that brings the two together in this kind of hip, urban way."

Rates for standard rooms will start at $159, making the hotel an affordable oasis of style within two blocks of Fort Lauderdale Beach. "We've established Ft. Lauderdale as a great gay destination, and the Royal Palms played a significant role in that," says Broward County's openly gay mayor, Ken Keechl. "It's only fitting that Richard and the Royal Palms takes the lead in moving the market another step ahead."

For a sneak preview of our 'reinvention' visit our gallery page here.

Tags: gay fort lauderdale