

ESCAPE



STAYCATIONS



Amplified LUXURY

The Guitar Hotel backs up its EYE-CATCHING design with unparalleled SHOWMANSHIP

By Paul Rubio

If the ample social media posts have piqued your curiosity about the world's first and only guitar hotel, follow your intuition and our advice: This skyscraping wonder is both a sight—and experience—to behold.

The gotta-see-it-to-believe-it Guitar Hotel at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood, a 450-foot-tall, all-glass architectural and engineering sensation modeled after back-to-back guitars and capped by illuminated strings projecting to the heavens, has redefined the South Florida skyline. But this \$1.5-billion inhabitable instrument isn't just for photos ops and in-awe stares; it's meant to be thoroughly enjoyed—like a rock star, no less.

In between the glass panes of the dueling guitars await 638 luxury guest rooms and suites, beginning at a generous 520 square feet, each kitted out in contemporary hardwood furniture and accented by tasteful gold touches and mood lighting. The hotel's music mantra is apparent in amenities such as the "Sound of Your Stay" in-room program, which includes a curated soundtrack and choice of Fender guitar for creating your own pop-up music studio.

Enveloping the guitars a world of Vegas-style excitement and temptations. Similar to the Strip, pool time and drinking dominate daylight hours. There are numerous nooks for sipping, socializing, and suntanning, though the best fun



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surfaces at the overwater villas of the Bora Bora lagoon in the form of premium cabanas inclusive of a personal plunge pool, a butler, social distancing, and priceless Instagram fodder.

Once the sun sets—and until it rises again—entertainment takes center stage. The guitar itself comes to life twice nightly through multi-sensory performances. The tech-heavy exhibitions continue indoors at the Oculus, where visitors can witness waterworks and music-driven laser shows. The casino floor soon ignites with the lights and hubbub of 3,100 slots and 193



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ABIAKA DINING ROOM; GUITAR HOTEL EXTERIOR; GRAND SUITE BEDROOM; THE OCULUS.

table games. All the while, 19 dining outlets and 20 bars and lounges swell with an international crowd looking to see, be seen, and indulge.

Headlining restaurant Abiaka marries the flavors of North and South America over a farmers market-inspired menu that includes grilled lobster with chimichurri, as well as fire water prawns, a Floridian take on Mexican *aguachile*. In addition, the popular Japanese restaurant Kuro rivals the best new-fashioned *izakaya* and *nikkei* stalwarts, delivering handcrafted cuisine and cocktails that are at once modern, traditional, and unabashedly palate-pleasing.

Similar to its larger-than-life design, the Guitar Hotel experience overwhelms in the best way possible. The property combines a twenty-first-century lust for opulence and excellence with a nostalgia for music and mayhem. Consider it an elevated way to vacation and party like a rock star, right in our own backyard. (seminolehardrockhollywood.com) ◀◀