

## **For Immediate Release:**

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## **A Legend Lives On: Cheeca Lodge & Spa Welcomes Back Guests Nearly 1 Year After Devastating Fire**

*New Main Lodge, New Luxury, New Life for the “Queen of the Florida Keys”*



Reopening today, one of Cheeca Lodge's first guests is escorted to its concierge-style, oceanview check-in where champagne awaits.

**Islamorada, Florida Keys (December 15, 2009)** - The legendary Cheeca Lodge & Spa, one of America's most historic resorts, begins an exciting new chapter in its 63-year history today, when it welcomes back guests after an extensive investment in the resort along with the construction of a new Main Lodge building.

Set on 27 private oceanfront acres in Islamorada, the “Sportfishing Capital of the World,” Cheeca Lodge & Spa has long been an exclusive hideaway for generations of families, celebrities, business leaders and U.S. Presidents. Framed by Atlantic Ocean and Florida Bay waters that

are home to more than 600 species of fish -- including sailfish, marlin, tarpon, bonefish and tuna – Cheeca Lodge & Spa's location between Everglades National Park and North America's only coral barrier reef has made it one of America's premier water sports and game fishing resorts.

Closed since a fire on December 31, 2008, Cheeca's new four-story Main Lodge was constructed with its original porte-cochere entrance, traditional Florida Keys architecture, chic West Indies décor, and spirited tradition of “barefoot elegance” -- a term coined at Cheeca – all intact. Because of the resort's historic significance, a major conditional use and administrative variance was enacted to ensure that Cheeca's iconic Main Lodge will be as it was before... only better. True to Cheeca Lodge's tradition of environmental sensitivity and preservation, the new Main Lodge was built to LEED specifications set forth by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Included in Cheeca's 212 beautifully appointed guestrooms, suites and bungalows are 62 new Premier Oceanfront and Island View Suites in the new Main Lodge. At 840 square feet, including 24 foot wide balconies, they are among the largest guest rooms in the Florida Keys. With floor-to-ceiling glass walls opening to panoramic ocean or island views, expansive private lanais, open-air round tubs for two with dramatic overhead tub fillers, and marble and glass rain showers for two, these suites are the most luxurious as well.

Along with a new Lobby Bar, Cheeca's new Main Lodge boasts two distinctive restaurants, each with indoor and al fresco dining. The new Nikai Sushi Bar offers the Florida Key's freshest sushi, Asian-inspired fare and a unique

selection of Japanese sake and wine, while the resort's signature Atlantic's Edge restaurant features a seasonal fine-dining menu with fresh local seafood – including colossal stone crabs year-round - prime steaks and organic local produce. The legendary Atlantic's Edge is under the creative direction of Concept Chef Dean James Max, who has been recognized as a "Great Regional Chef of America" by the prestigious James Beard Foundation. Cheeca's beloved beachfront Tiki Bar – an idyllic spot for relaxing with a frosty Margarita in-hand, telling fish tales, or just listening to the call of seabirds – also reopens with some exciting new enhancements.

"Returning guests will discover that Cheeca is still Cheeca, with its unique sense of place," says owner Jerry Johnson. "The lush, tropical gardens with surprises of nature around every corner – waterfalls, rare plants, private areas – are unchanged. But now there's even more of Cheeca Lodge & Spa to discover."



At its private welcome gate, Cheeca's first guests are greeted (their arrival announced by radio to the awaiting bell staff) and directed to the arrival portecochere where the resort's gracious bellmen welcome them by name.

Cheeca Lodge's unique setting, tradition of laid-back elegance, and reputation as "Queen of the Florida Keys" has drawn a plethora of families, honeymooners and notable guests. U.S. Presidents from Harry Truman to George Herbert Walker Bush (who lent his name to the George Bush Cheeca Lodge Bonefish Tournament from 1994 to 2003), journalists from Edward R. Morrow to Katie Couric, Hollywood stars from Eve Arden to Oscar winner Forrest Whitaker, singers from Bing Crosby to Pink, and sports figures from Ted Williams to Dale Earnhardt, Jr. are just a few prominent names past and present to fall under Cheeca Lodge's spell.

The resort's signature features – classic 525' wooden fishing pier, tropical gardens, crossing palms archway, saltwater snorkeling lagoon, nature trails, Tahitian-style Spa Lagoon, spectacular purple sunsets, secluded white sand beaches, Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course, Camp Cheeca children's environmental activity program, and access to world-class sportfishing – remain unchanged. At the new Cheeca Lodge & Spa there is simply more to do and even more to love, with expanded multi-use indoor spaces and terraces as well as 2,400 square-feet of new retail shops. An expanded roster of activities includes on-property flats boats with seasoned local guides for backcountry fishing, sightseeing, eco-tours, kiteboarding, and a junior angler program for teens.

Long an oasis of relaxation and rejuvenation, the Spa includes five treatment rooms, which join the poolside cabanas, adult-only spa lap pool and an oceanfront tiki hut for al fresco treatments. Cheeca's new spa concept is under the direction of new spa director Trisha Bannister, whose pedigree includes The Spa @ The Setai and The Spa at David Barton Gym at Gansevoort South in Miami Beach.

Located just 90 minutes south of Miami International Airport in the Florida Keys, Cheeca Lodge & Spa is just a few hours by air or drive from major East Coast U.S. and Canadian cities.

For more information, visit [www.cheeca.com](http://www.cheeca.com).

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