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# Convention South

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# 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue

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Beyond Practical**

**SMERF Events  
On A Dime:  
5 Expert Tips**

**Venues Worthy  
Of Your VIPs**

# A Breath Of Fresh Air For Island Events

By Ashley Wright

Key West has long been known for its casual and friendly island vibe, and is one of Florida's most natural and charming destinations. For reunions, weddings and other group getaways, the key offers a unique set of attractions and accommodations.

This is especially true at the newly opened Beachside Resort and Conference Center, where I spent several temperate days and nights.

"This resort was designed to host groups, especially large and extended families for their warm-weather getaways," said Tiffany Boeckman, director of group sales.

The resort's 222 guest rooms include 93 king rooms and 120 one-, two- or three-bedroom suites. The suites offer views that are truly breathtaking via spacious balconies, whether you're looking over the water, gardens or pool. Close-knit groups can set up camp in the suites

## key west site visit

because of the open gourmet kitchens, full-capacity washers and dryers, high-speed Internet access and satellite TVs.

For gatherings, 5,665 square feet of conference center space is located up a stairway from the Grand Lobby. The ballroom is decorated stylishly and gives a sophisticated, yet cozy ambiance for events such as weddings. Outdoors, the Flagler Terrace offers a relaxing and picturesque option for breezy nights, or the private beach allows attendees to place their feet in the sand.

The staff know how to get creative, and I enjoyed a well-executed breakfast on the terrace and an luau on the beach during my stay.

While Beachside is set away from the sometimes rowdy nightlife atmosphere of Key West's Duval Street, there are still nearby opportunities for shopping, dining and other



activities. Complimentary transportation transports groups to and from the hot spots such as Key West Butterfly and Nature Conservatory and the Pirate Soul Museum. The Pirate Soul Museum opened in 2005 and lives up to its tagline of "the world's most authentic and outrageous pirate museum." I especially enjoyed its interactive exhibits. ■

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