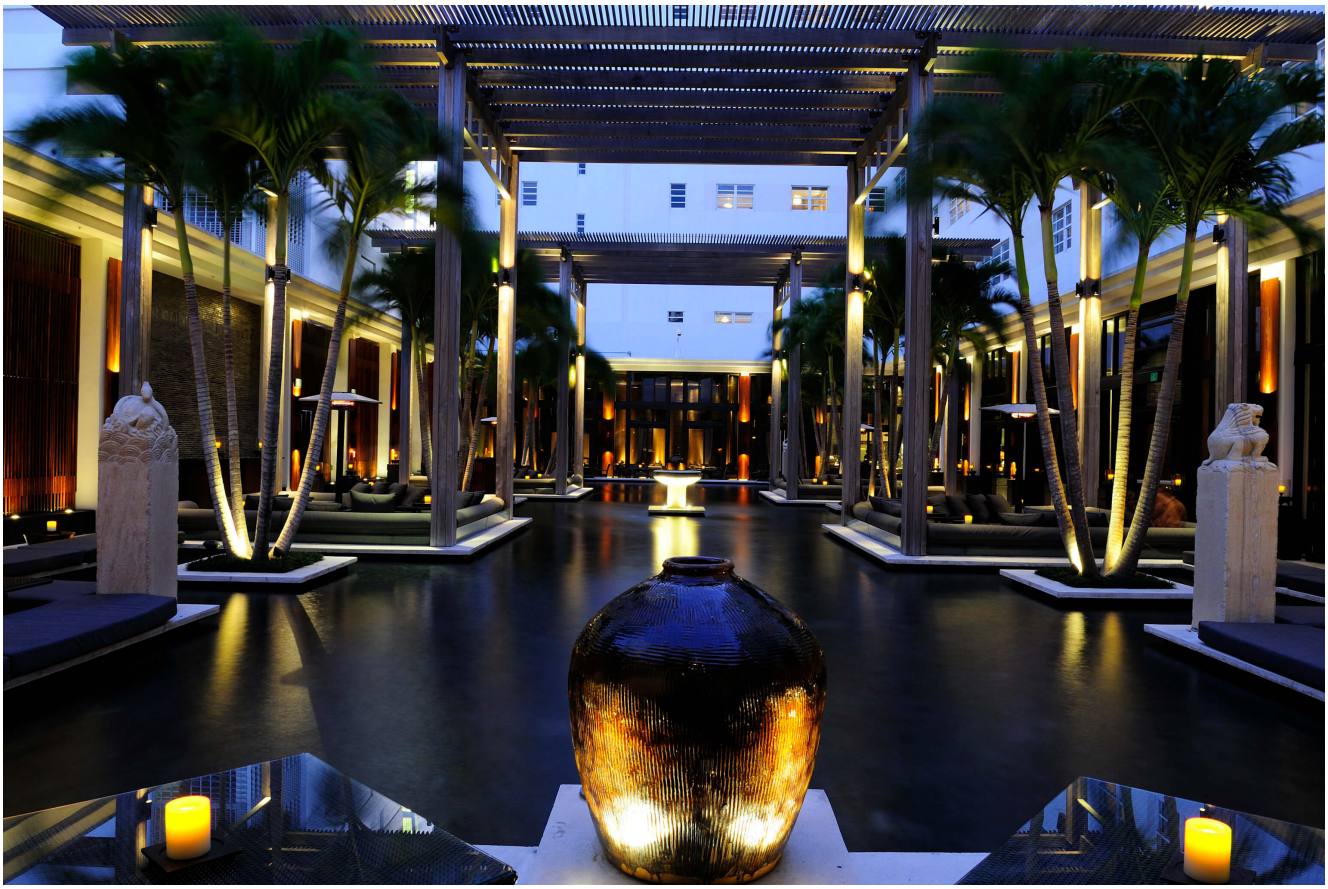
REVIEW: The Setai Miami



The Setai is quite a fancy place – this area outside of the main lobby is where they regularly hold bikini shows during swim week in Miami

This hotel was one of my first forays into luxury travel shortly after I made my first monies (I can't say money – I swear). Consequently, it holds a dear place in my heart, and I have been back many times since the hotel was first opened back in 2004. It's gone through quite a few owners and phases since, and I can't say that it's as great as it was back in 2004-2007 but it is still an amazing property and still ranks at the top of my list for quality of service and luxuriousness.

The first thing you notice when you enter the Setai is the very unique decor. This is because the builders were Indonesian and imported most of the materials from Southeast Asia, opting for teak from that region and exotic manta ray

skins and handmade items imported specifically for the hotel from Indo, Philippines, and Malaysia.

The result is stunning, with a sexy Asian elegance that you won't find in many US based hotels other than a few select Mandarin Orientals (like the one in Vegas).

There are two distinct areas to the hotel, the standard hotel room side with its own lobby, and the suite towers which have their own entrance and smaller lobby.

The pool is also one of my favorite aspects of this hotel, with three pools each at a different temperature so that you can roam from one to the other based on your whim.



Three pools each with their own temperature

I highly recommend checking out the suite towers when you book, although they are not reasonably priced by a long shot, they're worthy of special occasions, and the corner units with their floor to ceiling glass walls and the height of the building (it's one of the tallest in South Beach) makes for

spectacular views that you won’t find anywhere else on Collins Ave.



The Asian theme is throughout, the rooms are relatively small by suite standards but the glass makes you forget about the size

Before the Fontainebleau was rebuilt, and the Soho Beach House was established this was always my first choice, but since those two have come into existence I only choose the Setai if there’s a great deal to be had.

The service is bar-none though, and the concierge service is exquisite. However, since the changes in ownership some of the previous amenities have been deleted, including complimentary service in a fleet of Range Rover’s and Rolls-Royces.

PROS:

- You can’t beat the views here, it’s one of the tallest buildings on South Beach
- The pools are spectacular, and if you want to relax in South Beach it really doesn’t get better than this.

CONS:

- The price is pretty high even for a luxury hotel
- The service is not as good as it used to be, and they have deleted many amenities

SECRETS:

- Try out the Passion Fruit Martini, it's one of my favorite drinks ever, and i'm not into sweet drinks normally. It has a nice spicy kick to it!
- If you are trying to get a great rate, google "Setai Miami Rentals". The condo units owned here often have great rental rates, especially off-season



Order the Passion-Fruit Chili Martini (or two)

OTHER THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- I've mentioned some of these in my other post from South Beach here

REVIEW: A peek into the SOHO Beach House in Miami

There’s nothing quite as relaxing as tropical climates where a constant breeze keeps the sweat from building up and you can find some shade and a view. The SOHO Beach House in Miami is one of those spots.

From the minute you enter the building (located right next to the legendary Fontainebleau) there is a feeling of secrecy. After all, this is home of the SOHO club, known internationally as hidden lounges reserved for celebrities and well-heeled folk. You walk into the hidden check-in area where reception whisks you into an even more hidden (and velvet lined) elevator.

The best part of this hotel is the decor. It’s eclectic and feels like something that someone might put together for their own house. It’s a mishmash of items with a beachside bungalow feel. I wouldn’t have thought that leather chairs with reclaimed wood and outdoor cushions would feel at home inside a hotel room but for the SOHO Beach House it all works well.



The best part of this hotel though is the property itself, namely the upstairs spaces, and all the little nooks and crannies of the SOHO Beach House members-only property. As a matter of fact, if you're not a member of SOHO House this is the only way you're going to get into this place short of being invited by a friend.

There's a movie screening room, an upstairs hot-tub, a

smallish pool, and dedicated beach access with chaises for hotel guests. The anchor restaurant in the hotel is of course Cecconis, similar to the SOHO House in Los Angeles and definitely worth a visit. Everything about the decor of this property is charming, upscale, and incredibly detailed. It's got a whimsical touch to it and I definitely think it's a great alternative to your standard faire in South Beach (as there's so many options there).



Check out the wood tub, the exposed brass piping, and the wicker baskets for towels and bath accessories

PROS:

- Impeccably decorated with a great beach vibe. This place really stands out and has character and charm
- Incredible rooftop deck which is great for a romantic retreat or just relaxing with your favorite beverage.

- Each room is different from the others which gives it a bed and breakfast type of experience (if that’s your type of thing)

CONS:

- The service was not very good. It took multiple calls to get some extra soap and towels, and unlike many small boutique luxury properties, the staff doesn’t go out of their way to know your name or particular preferences.
- The pool area is relatively small and covered by the trees and high walls of the building on either side, making it hard to catch some rays or to find an available lounge chaise.

SECRETS:

- Ask the front desk to send a bartender to your room for happy hour. There’s a full bar set including fresh fruits, bitters, and assorted mixers on the bar cart in the room and bartenders on staff will come to your room to make drinks for you as you get ready for your night out on the town!

OTHER STUFF IN TOWN:

- With the caveat that i’ve been to Miami well over 30+ times one thing that always stands out to me (And still my favorite hotel in Miami) is the Setai. It’s the pinnacle of luxury in South beach and has been since it’s inception. I really enjoy a speciality martini they make there called the “Chili Passion Martini”. Enjoy it in the lobby of the Setai which is decorated with manta ray skin-lined walls and teak wood imported from Indonesia. I always make a stop here when i’m in Miami.

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