

The Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina

by Mike Cohen



There is no question about it. The Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel & Marina, currently in the midst of an impressive \$40 million upgrade program, represents an excellent choice for accommodations.

Ideally located in the downtown area, the hotel is only eight minutes from the airport. This striking, 27-storey high-end property has more than 700 non-smoking rooms and suites that feature private balconies overlooking Harbour Island, downtown and the hotel's 32-slip marina. All rooms include high-end signature bedding, flat-screen TVs that can connect with laptops and large, luxe bathrooms with the softest, fluffiest white towels and sleek granite countertops.

High-speed in-room internet is available for a daily service fee, and it is free in public spaces. General amenities include a palm-studded pool and groovy hot tub and a full-service spa/gym on the third floor, a business center and multiple newly renovated options for wining/dining that include white tablecloth fancy, sports bar casual, poolside grill and a lobby-side Starbucks cafe. There's both valet and self-parking, each for a daily rate. At night you can enjoy live music, adding to a very uplifting atmosphere.

As part of the major renovations, every single room has been given a makeover. The lobby will also be given a facelift while the check-in desk will move to a pod format. A full service Starbucks is in the works, along with an expanded outdoor patio, an outdoor beer garden and an extremely popular Topgolf simulator, using real golf balls.

Boasting a prime Channelside location, this waterfront hotel is tucked between the Tampa Convention Center and the Amalie Arena. The marina and the popular Riverwalk are right outside your door – The Riverwalk being a 2.4 mile path connecting culture and entertainment. I walked its distance several times and noticed plenty of bikers and those on Segways using the area as well.

We stayed in one of the magnificently newly renovated luxury suites on the 22nd floor with a connecting room.

New elevators feature neat touch screen pads to push what floor to go to.

The lobby bar offers cool cocktails and a stunning view of the marina and waterfront. Champions Bar and Grill showcases new additions in its impressive collection of sports memorabilia and décor, as well as offers the biggest games on new flat-screen TVs. For a

quiet meal, Café Waterside features new intimate seating arrangements along with stunning water views and a delicious menu. Champions is about to be transformed into an American Gastro Pub format,

While we did take advantage of the 24 hour room service, one night we chose to stay at the hotel and have dinner at the Waterside Grill. Let me strongly recommend this as a dining choice whether you are staying at the hotel or not. The restaurant offers a relaxed atmosphere and delicious American cuisine. You can feast on fresh seafood, prime steaks, expertly crafted cocktails and decadent desserts. They are open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and you can dine inside or on the terrace facing the Tampa waterfront.

WWW.TAMPAMARRIOTTWATERSIDE.COM

