

Guy Harvey Outpost hotel brand starts up in Florida

June 10, 2012 | By Doreen Hemlock, Sun Sentinel

Will fans of Fort Lauderdale-based marine artist and conservationist Guy Harvey stay at waterfront [hotels](#) and inns that bear his name?

That's the question analysts are asking as the Guy Harvey Outpost brand launches its first Florida resort this summer: the 211-room TradeWinds Sandpiper [Hotel](#) and Suites on St. Pete Beach.

Harvey, 56, who was raised in Jamaica and holds a doctorate in fisheries [management](#), has built a global following for his colorful artwork of marine life and for his marine research. He licenses his art on T-shirts, posters and other merchandise and leads marine study groups in South Florida and beyond.

The idea for a Guy Harvey hotel brand surfaced in 2007, when developer Mark Ellert realized that many smaller, independent hotels specialized in fishing, diving and watersports faced challenges making their name known in the cacophony of Internet marketing. Ellert thought one way to help the small hotels stand out would be to market them jointly with a brand linked to Harvey.

Working with the artist and other partners, the group came up with the vision for a brand that embraces watersports, [conservation](#) and marine research. They'd sign up eco-friendly hotels that Harvey fans could enjoy, where they could buy Harvey items and where Harvey-linked research and events could be held.

Hotelier Keith Overton, a former chairman of the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, said he signed up one of his two St. Pete Beach hotels with Outpost in hopes that the link can fill more rooms and boost nightly [rates](#).

"Guy Harvey has an audience he's cultivated with his art and science, and we believe an affiliation with him gives us a comparative advantage," said Overton.

The Outpost resort will feature Guy Harvey art in rooms plus a Guy Harvey gallery of fish from the Tampa area, complete with descriptions of those species.

Hotel analyst Scott Brush of Miami applauds the idea. He said [hotel guests](#) enjoy learning about the area they're visiting, from its environment to history. And Guy Harvey's outdoors fans are likely to add a bit more business for big, watersports-oriented hotels and give a major lift to small inns with fewer rooms.

"And the more properties they get, the more marketing dollars there are, the happier everyone is," said Brush.

Beyond resorts, Outpost now is assembling a collection of smaller "Expedition Properties." The 32-unit Green Turtle Club in the Abaco islands of the Bahamas joined last month. Ellert aims to sign up another four inns over the next year or so, including some in the Bahamas and Florida Keys.

