

KEYS,
PLEASE



Oceans Edge Resort
Located on Stock Island, the hotel offers activities including fishing, kayaking and biking, as well as six pools overlooking a marina.
oceansedgekeywest.com



Casa Marina
This historic resort, with Key West's largest private beach, was conceived by tycoon Henry Flagler and acted as WWII naval quarters.
casamarinaresort.com



Cheeca Lodge & Spa
After suffering hurricane damage, this Islamorada classic reopened with a new seaside pool and restaurant.
cheeca.com



EXPERIENCE

A place in the sand

A Key West sculptor teaches us the nuances of natural art

The first question sand artist Marianne van den Broek asks me is, “What do you want to make today?” The thought hadn’t even crossed my mind before joining her in Key West for a lesson in transforming that granular substance into something recognizable. Perhaps I’d enjoyed too many daiquiris on Duval Street the night before, but I assumed an amateur would only be capable of making a cereal box. In her calming Dutch accent, van den Broek reminds me that, in this medium, anything is possible.

Van den Broek is the artist-in-residence at the luxury resort Casa Marina, where she not only teaches the art of sand sculpture to guests but also creates pieces for weddings and other events. I decide to construct a replica of my Welsh corgi, Root Beer. Apparently, I’m not that original. Van den Broek says dogs are the most popular option.

We start with a cylindrical plastic form,

filling it with layers of powdery sand and water. Then the real artistry begins. Van den Broek’s oddball assortment of tools reminds me of the weapons from the game Clue: a butter knife, a bucket, a trowel, a plastic fork. Together, we chip away at the sandy pile with the trowel and knife, crafting such curvy details as my dog’s snout and ears.

As with many creative types who’ve relocated to Key West, the Holland-born artist was drawn to the island’s bohemian atmosphere and sun. Besides teaching, she also organizes the city’s International Sand Art Competition, held each November.

After a couple of hours of simultaneously chipping away and smoothing out the sand, I begin to see my pooch staring back at me. As Van den Broek teaches me how to add furry details with the fork, a passing woman asks, “Oooh, is that a kitty cat?” I guess I need another lesson—and a daiquiri. —DERRICK J. LANG