

ROCK STAR TREATMENT

Hard Rock Hotel Cancun's all-inclusive experience lets you live like royalty

Words by Vanessa Pascale



“Hey Jude, don’t let me down, You have found her, now go and get her, Remember to let her into your heart, Then you can start to make it better..”

The familiar lyrics, crooned by the front man in the band below, flood the pool area and find their way up to my fifth floor hotel room balcony at the Hard Rock Hotel Cancun. As a music enthusiast and Beatles fan, I can’t think of a better way to kick-off my all-inclusive HRH experience. Hypnotized by the turquoise and cobalt blue undulating waves just passed the pool, I take a sip of my strawberry piña colada, breathe in the sweet smell of salt water, and exhale all my work-week tension. Now *this* is the sort of view and lifestyle that I am all about. Only minutes into my stay, and I’m

already impressed with how quickly the HRH has transported me to a state of Zen.

But let’s start at the very beginning. Upon arrival, I am ushered to the VIP area, where mini empanadas, bite-sized confections, chips, salsa and guacamole welcome me. Naturally, the requisite, unbridled photo-snapping commences, and, thanks to the free wireless internet provided throughout the property, are posted immediately to social media. My drink order is taken (strawberry piña colada, please) as the swift check-in process is set in motion.

I am presented with a gold plastic bracelet to wear the duration of my stay, which grants me unlimited cocktails, food, and entertainment. I am ready to rock ‘n’ roll —on to the room.

Sleek furnishings and music-inspired art outfit my deluxe oceanfront room. A double hydro-tub punctuates the space – acting as a divider between the bedroom and bathroom vanity where dual white vessel sinks sit along with a neat row of Rock Spa toiletries. If you don’t dig bubble baths, there’s a private shower. Tucked away in the closet are two white robes and slippers, and a digital safe. An LCD TV with satellite, Bluetooth-enabled wireless alarm clock radio, coffee maker, hair dryer, and iron comprise the in-room electronics. To accentuate the rocker vibe, there’s a cabinet equipped with four liquor dispensers (top-shelf vodka, tequila,



The Sound of Your Stay

The signature amenity program offers guests an all-encompassing, hands-on music experience, including free delivery of Fender guitars and DJ equipment to use at no cost.

whisky, and rum) next to a mini fridge stocked with bottled water, juice, domestic beer, and sodas. The 24-hour room service and turndown service (yes, they leave chocolate on your pillow) are other nice touches. It's a luxury to have a cheeseburger, fries, and flan brought to your room at 2 am and even nicer when you're served breakfast in bed—at no additional cost. I have everything I need right here. But I didn't travel to Cancun to sit in a room, I came for an adventure.

Suited up in a brand-new bikini, half-full cocktail in hand, sunnies in place, channeling Beyoncé, I saunter down to the pool. Fashioned like a music museum, the hotel is teeming with iconic memorabilia from musicians we love. A shattered guitar, framed gold records, photos, and costumes worn by pop icons like Britney Spears and Katy Perry are simply a handful of treasures displayed for guests to ogle

(the Hard Rock Hotels own the world's largest music memorabilia collection with over 80,000 priceless, curated pieces). As I pass through Smash Bar—the lively lounge-billiards-shuffleboard-area on the main floor I discover a smorgasbord of savory and sugary treats (donuts, cupcakes, mini tarts, sandwiches, fruit, crostini galore)—artfully arranged for snacking and served alongside carafes of tea and coffee. This spread is too enticing to simply walk by without sampling, so, I indulge my sweet tooth. Here, it's all about indulging till your heart's content, and that's what I intend to do.

The pool area features a bar flanked by Pizzeto (which serves brick oven-style pizzas) and Frida (an eatery dishing up traditional Mexican cuisine), and two swim-up bars. Throughout the day, barbecues, buffets, and food stands serving fresh ceviche pop up to feed ravenous guests. I order my second

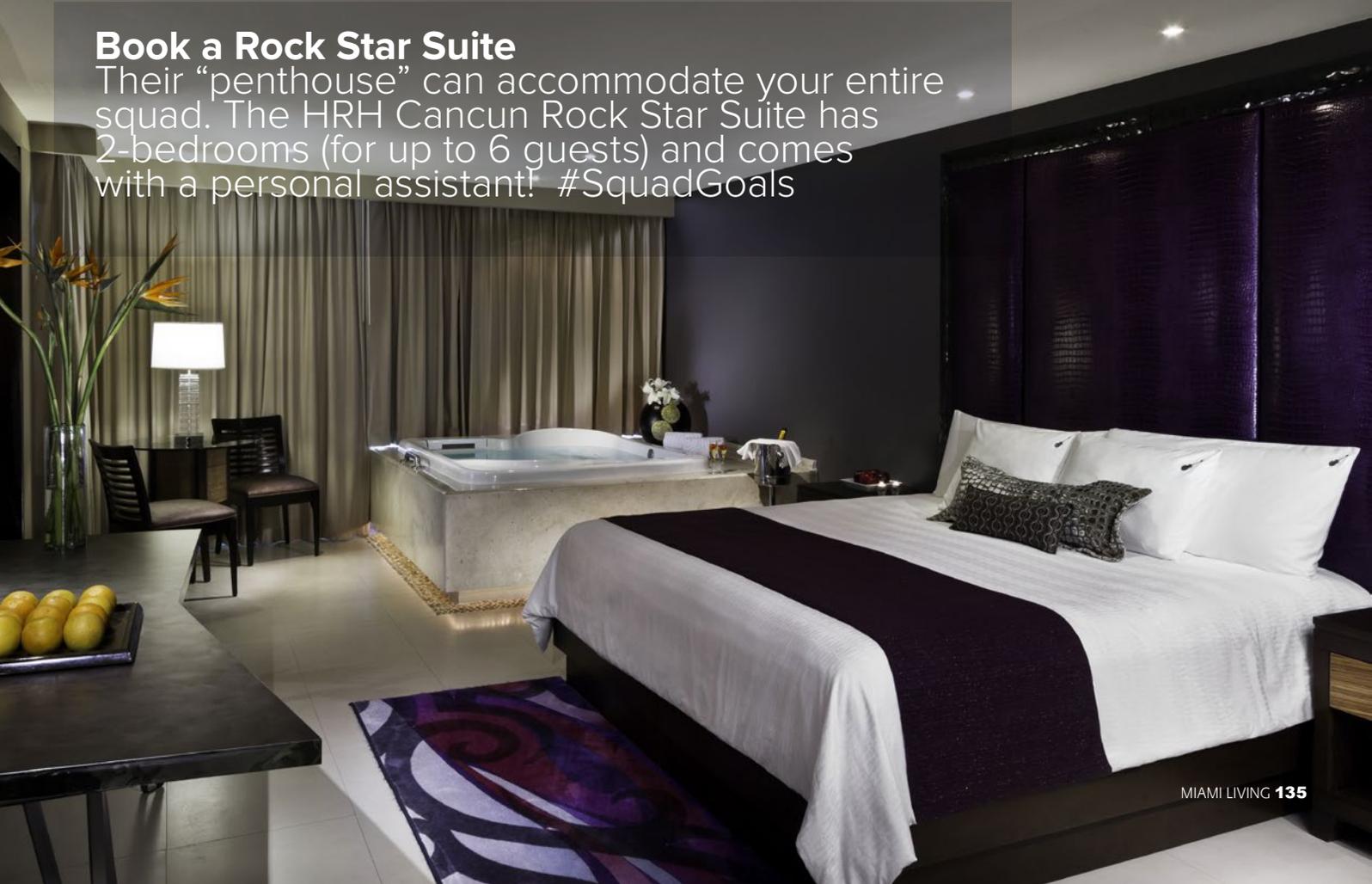
strawberry piña colada, and scope out the crowd, which consists predominately of 20-40-somethings: entourages of ladies and men here for bachelor and bachelorette parties, a few Calgary Flames players, young families, couples... Surrounding the infinity-edge lagoon-style pool are rows and rows of reclining lounge chairs filled with sunbathers. At the epicenter of the pool is a shallow cove with built-in loungers. (Note: My SPF 30 did not stand a chance against the Cancun sun—remember to reapply sunscreen often as I am sure, like me, you intend to spend most of your time outdoors.)

Descend a few concrete steps to find the white sand beach appointed with lounge chairs, and side tables, and of course, the Caribbean Sea. Local merchants selling jewelry and other goods and servers pass through to take your order. There's an inviting setup of cabanas with massage stations inside, volleyball net, tree-house-like lifeguard stand, outdoor showers and enclosed bathrooms. I find a lounge chair and settle down. Later on, as the sun begins to slip away, a bride and groom emerge for wedding photos on the sand. The beachfront backdrop is simply gorgeous—it's no wonder that so many couples regularly secure the hotel for their big day. From my balcony that night, I see their wedding reception in full effect on the third floor terrace overlooking the breathtaking moonlit pool and beach. (Hard Rock Hotel has exclusively partnered with award-



Book a Rock Star Suite

Their “penthouse” can accommodate your entire squad. The HRH Cancun Rock Star Suite has 2-bedrooms (for up to 6 guests) and comes with a personal assistant! #SquadGoals





FUN FACT

Every HRH is a live music venue. They put on more than 30,000 live music events globally every year.

winning celebrity wedding planner Colin Cowie Weddings & Honeymoons to assist with onsite weddings.)

When you're not beach- or poolside, you're likely to be dining at one of the six restaurants or seven bars and lounges on the property. There's a cornucopia of appetizing restaurants to satiate every palate: Ipanema (Brazilian steakhouse), Frida (Mexican), Ciao (Italian).... Food is predominately served buffet-style, however, at Zen you can relax and watch chefs whip up your meal on the hibachi grill. A popular spot, I recommend making reservations to dine here.

HRH does a fantastic job at keeping guests amused with live entertainment. Pick up their activities program so that you don't miss out on the activities you're interested in, like aqua volleyball, Spanish class, Zumba, blackjack, and wine tasting. The pool party is essential for those seeking music-fueled fun in the sun. Swim-suit clad staffers dance among the sea of guests, reminding everyone to let loose, while an animated emcee and DJ take the party to the next level. When the pool crew floats by to pour shots of liquor into the mouths of willing, excited guests, you know you're at a party.

There is a list of nightly events, including flair

bartender demos, Michael Jackson trivia, and theater shows that feature break dancing, magic, and light & fire theatrics. Check out the Music Lab—available to guests 12 and up—, a free interactive program divided into four classes: Jam Band, Spin Session, RockTube, and Studio Time. Music enthusiasts will love this unrivaled experience. Other amenities onsite include The Body Rock Fitness Center, The Rock Spa, Posh Beauty Salon, basketball courts, tennis courts, ping pong, The Little Big Club kids program, and The Cavern Club for teens.

To indulge your adventurous side, sign-up on the pool level for water/outdoor activities like parasailing, zip-lining, snorkeling, jet skiing, and boat tours brought to you by Aquaworld—which is a short walk from the hotel. With so much to do at the hotel, it's hard to leave—but if you'd like to explore the surrounding area and sightsee, HRH will happily help arrange tours and transportation. The staff is exceptionally accommodating, informative, and friendly—and they are among the top reasons why you should choose the Hard Rock Hotel Cancun when planning your next vacation. **ML**

Hard Rock Hotel Cancun is located at Blvd. Kukulcan Km14.5 Hotel Zone, Cancun, Quintana Roo, Mexico, CP:77500.

To book a room or suite, call 855-537-4606. For more information, visit: www.hrhcancun.com.

Enlist the assistance of the concierge level program, Rock Royalty Level (which offers guests seeking the ultimate VIP experience superior amenities and benefits), to further elevate your rock star experience.