

Coverage of the "South Beaches" of Pinellas County & More

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# Paradise News

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## TradeWinds Splash Island Water Park A "Phenomenal Success"





# TradeWinds Makes a Big Splash

By Peter A. Roos



Resorts throughout the west coast of Florida have faced many challenges in the past few years, not the least of which was the weather of the 2010 winter season and the threat of oil on our beaches last summer. The effect is still being felt due to cancellations of long-planned events like weddings and conventions.

As the largest resort in the area, the TradeWinds has taken a leadership role in responding to these challenges. Through a combination of creative marketing ideas,

partnerships with community organizations and green initiatives, they are looking forward to a bright future in St. Pete Beach. The resort has embraced new family friendly activities that will both increase occupancy and provide new revenue centers for the resort. The inflatable slide that has proven a popular amenity for youngsters on the beach behind the resort has recently been joined by an amazing Water Park.

Splash Island Water Park is a 15,750 square-foot floating inflatable water park within the swim zone off the beach at the TradeWinds Island Grand. A perfect accompaniment to the popular three-story High Tide Slide on the beach, the water park offers more than 11 fun-filled features - from jumping and climbing, to relaxing and sunning.

## Some Park features include:

- Summit Express** - A slide, with a climbing side and a bounce cave
- Super Tramp & The Rebound** - Large trampolines for bouncing and launching into the water
- Jungle Joey** - Climbing fun, complete with a mini-slide
- Rockit** - A huge, inflatable island with seating for four or more to rock and roll
- Revolution** - A slide with three ways to climb it
- Fiesta Loungers** - Loungers immersed in the water, providing a place to cool off and chill out
- Splashmats & Runways** - Situated throughout the park, places for running, playing and sunning
- Island Rafts** - Oversized rafts for up to four guests at a time

The park has certified lifeguards on duty. Children 40"-45" must be accompanied by someone over 16 years old; and must weigh at least 30 pounds. All guests wear life jackets.

A variety of pricing options are available beginning at \$16/hour for guests, \$25 for non-guests.

TradeWinds Splash Island is open to the public; however parking at TradeWinds is generally reserved for

overnight guests, so local visitors are encouraged to walk down the beach or arrive by trolley. The addition of the Splash Island has created numerous Community Benefits, and has forged a strong, multifaceted relationship between the resort and Tampa Bay Watch.

In addition to creating 16 new positions at the TradeWinds Island Resorts, 6.5% of revenues from Splash Island are contributed to the State of Florida. TradeWinds supports Tampa Bay Watch's Habitat Restoration and Education Programs through an annual financial contribution of \$5,000 in 2011 and, starting in 2012, the greater of \$10,000, or 2% of Splash Island revenues, for the life of the project.

TradeWinds employees participate in coastal cleanup events. Tampa Bay Watch will help design and stock a large touch tank on-site at the TradeWinds, set up science and educational displays and will offer groups a half day team building opportunity as part of their events at the resort. TradeWinds will host Tampa Bay Watch's Summer Camp attendees on property for touch tank & Splash Island experiences.

*"Splash Island is already a great success", said TradeWinds General Manager Keith Overton. "We are operating the park daily 10 am – 5 pm, weather permitting, and we've been selling out the parks current capacity of 60 thrill seekers every hour of every day when the weather is nice."*

For more information about TradeWinds Resorts and their new Splash Park, visit [www.JustLetGo.com/waterpark](http://www.JustLetGo.com/waterpark)

From now through September 30, special packages invite Florida residents to the TradeWinds Island Grand with discounts both midweek and on weekends.

A 3-night package includes a gulf-front parlor or better room, a full day slide and 1-hour Splash Island Water Park Pass, a Vacationing Gourmet Card (20% savings on all resort food & beverage), the Nightly Resort Fee, a beach cabana and extra benefits at both Tradewinds Resorts. Rates begin at \$693 for midweek and at \$753 for weekends. Florida residents also save at the TradeWinds Sandpiper with 15% off already discounted best available rates and receive Surf n' Sun scratch off card. Everyone wins something. Prizes include dinner for 2, TradeWinds beach bag and towel, high tide slide passes, and more. Promotion does not include the resort amenity fee.

The TradeWinds offer guests a Marine Bio Camp for youngsters, and a Teen Marine Bio-Adventure. Both TradeWinds properties have been awarded the Two Palm Green Lodging Certification (*top award available*) from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in recognition of their efforts to protect the area's natural resources.

After retrofitting beachfront lighting to protect sea turtle nesting habitat, the TradeWinds had their first turtle hatching on the beach in more than 25 years.

The resort is once again inviting Tampa Bay Ray's fans to their beach to watch the team's away games while enjoying the resort's hospitality. Baseball fans are invited to head out to St. Pete Beach for fun-filled, family-friendly game watching parties all season long. The games are broadcast on a huge screen directly on the beach and radio



*TradeWinds GM, Keith Overton, who was named 2010 Tourism Person of the Year by the Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce on May 9, 2011, introduces the Splash Island Water Park, and Rachel Arndt of Tampa Bay Watch at the park's introductory press conference.*



station 620 WDAE will broadcast live starting with their pre-game show. Food and beverages including grilled burgers and chicken sandwiches, wings and bratwurst and buckets of beer will be available for purchase. A gyroscope ride will also be set-up on the beach for thrill seeking fans. Coolers are not allowed, but fans are encouraged to bring their own beach chairs, umbrellas and towels. Coupons for slide passes will also be distributed \$10 (normally \$30). Beginning at noon, \$10 parking will be offered, while available, at the Island Grand and at the neighboring Sandpiper Suites. Game watching parties are planned for the following dates. *(discounted from \$15, with 10% parking & cookout proceeds donated to the Ray's Foundation)*

**Friday, May 20 - 7:10 p.m. - vs. Florida Marlins - Kick off**  
**Sunday, June 12 - 1:35 p.m. - vs. Baltimore Orioles**  
**Sunday, July 10 - 1:05 p.m. - vs. New York Yankees**  
**Sunday, July 31 - 4:10 p.m. - vs. Seattle Mariners**  
**Sunday, August 28 - 1:07 p.m. - vs. Toronto Blue Jays**

### Additional Community Support

The original owners/developers of TradeWinds, Jeff and Joan Fortune, wanted to "give back" to the community when they sold the company in late 1995. They started Academy Prep of St. Petersburg shortly thereafter. Their goal was to create future community leaders. When Tim Bogott's group acquired the TradeWinds in 1999, Jeff introduced Tim to Academy Prep his first day on the job. He's been an active board member ever since. Several TradeWinds employees join Tim, volunteering their time and portions of their paychecks to support Academy Prep. The resort hosts an annual Christmas party for Academy Prep students, complete with activities, pizza and gifts from Santa. They are also a major supporter of the school's fundraisers.

TradeWinds has been deemed an autism friendly business by the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities.

The TradeWinds team was trained how to interact with people who have autism. "Guests can request gluten free meals at our outlets and they can order a Beaker's Snack Attack amenity which would include a Beaker doll, TW lunch bag and gluten free goodies." Reservations also has a list of questions they ask parents of children with autism so they know how to best accommodate the family (i.e. room location, if they're sensitive to noise/cleaners). Future additions to the program include a Social Book outlining what families can expect during their stay at TradeWinds and an autism friendly kit that may include a door alarm.

The TradeWinds also supports Athletes for Hearts and the Ronald McDonald House of Tampa Bay through their heavy involvement in the Fishing for Hearts tournament, scheduled this year for Oct. 14 at Loggerhead Marina. Serving as honorary chairman for the 2nd year is Joe Maddon of the Tampa Bay Rays. Athletes for Hearts provides financial assistance to families with children in need of medical treatment for a heart condition and to fund advancements in medical technology for the treatment of heart disease, with a special emphasis on heart conditions affecting children. Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tampa Bay provides comfort, care and support to children and their families through the operation of core programs like the Ronald McDonald House, Ronald McDonald MobileCare, and grants to nonprofit organizations that assist children. The Ronald McDonald House of Tampa Bay provides a home-away-from-home for families of pediatric patients in area hospitals. The TradeWinds actively supports these charities through this event and through other programs year-round. Residents of St. Pete Beach should be proud to share their little corner of Paradise with an ecologically-friendly, community-oriented corporate partner like the TradeWinds Resorts.

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