



Sanctuary Cap Cana – Star Service Online

Fishing Lodge at Cap Cana is one of three properties in the Grand Resorts of Cap Cana collection, managed by Virginia-based Salamander Hotels and Resorts. The collection includes the 176-suite Sanctuary Cap Cana and the 113-room Ocean Club Cap Cana, scheduled to open in 2013.

All three resorts are located within the 30,000-acre Cap Cana master-planned resort community that features hiking trails, beaches and the Jack Nicklaus-designed Punta Espada Golf Course, ranked as the best in the Caribbean by Golfweek Magazine. Two more Nicklaus courses are planned.

Facilities at Fishing Lodge include two restaurants (with plans for three more), two bars, four pools, a fitness center, boutiques, meeting space and a wedding chapel. This impressive resort is designed as a village with all-condominium accommodations situated across the grounds. Interspersed are trickling fountains, small side streets of high-end boutiques, bars and shops.

Reception handles guest requests with precision, and the row of soon-to-open shopping outlets that leads from the front gate to the check-in area is a positive sign that this resort has deservedly high hopes. The resort's name reflects upon its location along the popular marina where multimillion-dollar yachts and fishing boats congregate after excursions in the deep sea just beyond the resort's confines. Guests should not be confused by the name, however, as there is little emphasis yet placed on fishing within the resort other than the boats that entertain in the marina. This is both a family and couples-designed vacation spot meant to surpass the all-inclusive ventures in Bavaro and provide a sense of luxury that few others in the area can offer.

Plans are in place for an impressive roster of dining outlets, including an Italian restaurant and a steak house. At inspection, the gourmet bistro was open, offering savory treats including a spicy crab-meat sandwich and conch fritters baked to perfection. The continental buffet dining room by reception serves a cooked-to-order breakfast plus specialties at lunch for those who prefer air-conditioning. Adjacent to the dining room is a happening bar set to the tunes of snazzy music and illuminated by homemade glasswork in a rainbow of colors. A game room sits off to one side of reception and can double as a boardroom. Additional bars include the Bohio Bar (meaning "community place" in the Dominican Taino language), which is set under a beautiful thatched cana roof and serves as a communal place for most guests. Three other pools line the grounds here, playing host to the bathing-suit-clad.

Meeting capacity here is perfect for incentive groups looking to offer a combination of vacation and business meetings. Plentiful space is available near reception, including a quartet of breakout rooms centering around a fountained courtyard giving off an almost Moorish vibe.



All the high-tech appurtenances and free wireless Internet access are in place to accommodate groups. The Wi-Fi signal can also be reached at most restaurants and public areas. An Internet-equipped computer is available for guest use just beyond reception.

Spa-goers are given a quick lift to the gorgeous spa at Sanctuary just down the road. On-site at Fishing Lodge is a brand new fitness area with the latest equipment and views of the main shopping plaza. Most shops had yet to open at inspection, but plans are under way to provide a solid blend of high-end luxury with affordable boutiques including sundries and convenience shops.

Lounge chairs crafted out of white-painted wicker arch back in swanky curves and provide the perfect vantage point for guests to survey the crystalline water from one of numerous infinity-edge pools seemingly pouring over the marina or into one of many gardens that grace the grounds.

Weddings are sure to be a hit here, with bridal parties able to arrive by boat to a traditional village church that seems to be cut-and-pasted from a quiet Santo Domingo courtyard from Columbus' day.

Accommodations come in junior suites and one-, two- and three-bedroom units. The smallest, which is an understatement, features a kitchenette, spacious living area and bedroom. Beds, as in all units, are topped with fine linens and crisp duvets with individually adjustable reading lights situated bedside. The color scheme is based on a palette of white and off-white with distinctive blue and light green hues that mimic the color of the water in the sunlight. Furnishings here are all handcrafted using local materials, and many pieces are produced on property. Accent pieces include marine-themed artwork, seashell-graced sculptures and centerpieces, and Dominican folkloric pieces.

Larger condominium units center around a common living area and range in size from one to a trio of bedrooms, all of which have a private bath. Rainfall showerheads, designer above-counter sinks, marble surfaces, soaking tubs and Dorothy Prentice toiletries add a luxurious touch. Generous closet space is highly appreciated, as are robes and safes. Furnished terraces in all offer splendid views, but nothing tops the dozen swim-out suites that each give way to their own infinity pools overlooking the marina.

Housekeeping visits daily to tidy and stock up, which is perfect for families who appreciate larger accommodations versus a traditional hotel room. All units here come with iPod docking stations, coffeemakers, flat-screen cable TVs and free high-speed Internet access.



The resort offers all-inclusive and European Plan options. For now, the all-inclusive does not include meals at sister property Sanctuary down the road. But, at some point, plans will be all-inclusive between the two resorts. Meal prices are competitive, and the kitchens in condos are a major perk here.

A major benefit here is that few have yet discovered the expansive amenities and secluded luxury of the Fishing Lodge, giving guests here the feeling of having the resort to themselves. Within two months of opening, two major events bought the property out entirely, which proves its worth in the meetings and incentives agenda.

Cap Cana is clearly the front runner in the high-end, upscale category in Punta Cana. The new management by Salamander here is indicative of the grandiose plans for impeccable customer service and return visits from happy guests. Rates are highly competitive as the resort enters its first full year of service, and by the size of the yachts that dock in the nearby marina, the budget of guests will allow for substantial growth opportunity. This is a great alternative to those looking for Cap Cana privacy, but wanting to branch out from Sanctuary elegance.