

THE SPELL OF SUGARLOAF LODGE



In the Florida Keys, a Flying Physician Finds...Everything

destination, and you have what Laskin considers the ultimate fly-in fantastic time.

"The skies are as beautiful as they get," he says. "Fly over the Gulf the last 100 miles from Marco Island to see the chain of Keys coming off the southern tip of Florida, or fly over the peninsula and just follow the chain to Sugarloaf. Either way will be a delight. The water and islands below are a variety of blues and greens that will put a smile on your face." Of course, if you want to make like Laskin and his longtime companion, Penny Travis, you'll stow fold-up bicycles in the plane and cycle the 17 miles that lay between Sugarloaf Lodge and Key West. "When you're in the mood for a little more excitement," he says. "There is a bike path for much of the route and what a great way to appreciate the islands, just zipping down the road." Or, taking another cue from the Sugarloaf-loving couple, you'll simply kick-back in one of the lodge's waterfront rooms, contemplate the fascinating mangrove habitat and its thriving wildlife that is your view, and revel in a haven of timeless beauty. Indeed, it is here the Florida Keys weave a spell that Laskin, for one, finds absolutely magical – maybe even transformative.

"Really, after flying to Sugarloaf I feel 'different' for months," he says. "It's a leap of faith. Do it and you will see what I mean."

For details on this fly-in fabulous retreat- and to request permission to land at 7FA1, visit sugarloaflodge.com (800) 553-6097. ✕

"So many people are in a hurry and really, the voyage is everything!" says Jeff Laskin, a maxillo-facial surgeon in private practice in Gainesville, Florida. "When I began flying, I soon realized that not only was getting there half the fun, but often it was *more* than half the fun." What is the fun making up the remainder? To Laskin it's obvious: Sugarloaf Lodge on Sugarloaf Key. This fly-in fabulous retreat with its own private airstrip (7FA1) "is the real Florida Keys," he says. "Before you know it you'll be sipping your margarita and looking out at the mangroves – relaxing, rejuvenating, looking out *and* looking within." Beauty that is breathtaking and activities – sailing, boating, kayaking, biking – that immerse you in that certain Keys something Laskin calls "an attitude, a feeling, an experience," Sugarloaf Lodge is this

doctor's Shangri-la – loved not least for the fun of its welcome.

"Runway 10/28 is listed as 2600 feet by 90 feet, but when you get there just know that the 90 feet was in the good old days and now if you can get two out of three on the "improved" pavement you will feel it's a landing to be proud of!" says Laskin, pilot of a 1971 Piper Arrow. "My last two usual comments when we approach short final to landing?" He laughs: "'Boy it's narrow!' and 'We're in!'" Once in, this part-time artist (the Piper's snazzy paint scheme is a Laskin design) thrills to the joys of Sugarloaf Lodge. "The restaurant, the Tiki bar, the live music and dancing..." Why, just add these to charter fishing for bonefish, tarpon and permit that is said to rival the best in the world, and diving around legendary Looe Key Reef, a major SCUBA