

BALLAST KEY
SECLUSION AT FLORIDA'S SOUTHERNMOST POINT

By David M. Brown

Have it all, just like Bogie and Bacall. Sail away 10 miles south of Key West to Ballast Key, a wildlife-rich subtropical island in the Straits of Florida at the southernmost point of the continental United States. They have a saying here: Next stop, Havana.

Named for a 17th-century shipwreck that scattered iron ballast along one of its beaches, anchor-shaped Ballast Key is 28 lush, bucolic acres – remote, yet welcoming. As the only private island in the Key West National Wildlife Reserve, Ballast Key's nearest neighbor is eight Atlantic Ocean miles away. That could just as well be 80, so serene is the lifestyle here, so uncluttered the space.

Built in 1978 on a 14-acre landscaped lot, the island's 3,904-square-foot main house has five bedrooms and bathrooms, including a master suite positioned to take in sunrises and sunsets. The steel-roofed home has terra-cotta floors, central air-conditioning and

heating, and all the modern conveniences: dishwasher, washer and dryer, refrigerator and freezer, oven, range, and microwave. Fresh water is provided via desalination. And, of course, huge windows throughout the home deliver views across the waves.

Just a stroll away, a three-bedroom, three-bathroom guesthouse overlooks a palm-tree-lined beach. Your guests will share in the island's expansive views of water and sky as the sounds of the sea whisper to them day and night.

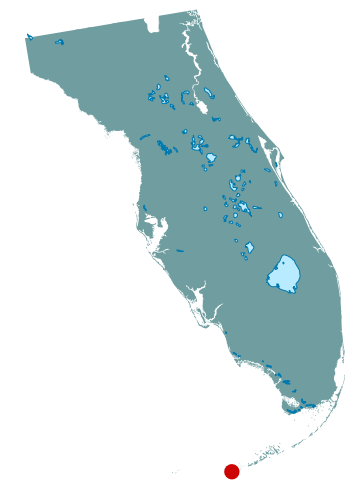
Ballast Key, which has its own lagoon and picnic-friendly beaches, is well suited for days of lounging. Don't fret about upkeep: A local caretaker is available to tend to the grounds and its golf carts, which offer motorized transit on the trails when you're too relaxed to walk. Just offshore is top-notch snorkeling and scuba diving – or follow in the footsteps of Ernest Hemingway, who savored the saltwater

fishing when he frequented the area decades ago. Key West, with its many laid-back restaurants, bars, and historical attractions, is just minutes away by boat or helicopter.

Sailing enthusiasts will appreciate the proximity to Dry Tortugas National Park, well known as a breeding ground for seabirds and legends of sunken treasure. Its centerpiece, Fort Jefferson, constructed with more than 16 million bricks from 1846-1875, is the Western Hemisphere's largest masonry structure. (And, it remains unfinished.)

Ballast Key came on in the 1989 James Bond film License to Kill, but the Dom Perignon-sipping secret agent wasn't the island's only brush with celebrity. The island's owner, Key West developer David Wolkowsky, has hosted Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, British Prime Minister Edward Heath, the Bee Gees, and Gloria Estefan on its serene sands.

This island idyll, where the stars that fill the clear night skies shine as brightly as its many distinguished guests, could be yours for only \$15.8 million. Time to sail away.



BALLAST KEY

Florida Keys
14 acres

USD 15,800,000

INQUIRIES

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