



Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino

By Ray Collins



Chances are you are aware of Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa, but you may not have realized how it wound up there:

City workers discovered Native American remains while building a parking garage in 1980. They re-located the remains on this land off I-4 near Orient Road and the state granted reservation status to the Seminole Tribe a year later.

And now there are hundreds of thousands of reservations made each year at this—the biggest casino in Florida. Along with the 550 rooms and 9 restaurants, the facility is 245,000 square feet. Here are some more numbers: 5,000 slot machines, 179 card tables and a state-of-the-art Poker room featuring 46 tables.

We arrived in time for lunch and had several options. There are 10 fine dining, casual dining and "quick bites" spread across the property. We went out to the pool bar and split a club sandwich. The restaurant has the feel of a sports bar with all the big screen TVs.

There are three different pools, some with cabanas. You can purchase a day pass and spend time at the resort's pools even if you're not a guest.

There are security attendants at the elevators, and you must show your room key to get up into the towers.

Gamblers or those with day passes aren't allowed up into the towers. The resort has 550 rooms and the one we were in had a big picture window and a magnificent view of the pool area as well as the downtown Tampa skyline off in the distance.

We went to dinner at a place off the lobby called Council Oak Steak & Seafood. We had NO idea this would be a five-star dining experience! Move over Ruth's Chris, Fleming's and Hyde Park—Council Oak is just as good!

Erin had bone-in ribeye and I had a nine-ounce filet. We split Brussel sprouts and mashed potatoes. The service and the food were absolute perfection. We are not big gamblers, but we'd come back again just for this restaurant. Easily one of the best in Tampa.



Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa has something for everybody—gambling, food, and entertainment.

We coordinated our visit with a concert by iconic singer Tony Orlando. We met him a few years ago during his performance in Sarasota and had stayed in touch. When this date was announced he invited us to be his guests.

Concerts take place in the Hard Rock Event Center, and there are dozens of acts that come through each year. We're glad we finally discovered Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tampa. It's a fun place to go, and it's right in our own backyard.

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