



Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa

Media Contact:

Valeria Lento
Communications Manager
(850) 267-9631
vlento@HiltonSandestinBeach.com

THE HILTON SANDESTIN BEACH EARNS A SILVER *FLAGLER AWARD* FROM VISIT FLORIDA AT 44th ANNUAL FLORIDA GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM

Northwest Florida's premier hotel was recognized for "Creativity in Public Relations"

Destin, Fla. (September 29, 2011) – The Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa was one of a select group of Florida tourism-oriented businesses and organizations to be awarded with a Visit Florida Flagler Award for outstanding tourism marketing at the 44th Annual Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism in Hollywood, Fla. this week. The Hilton Sandestin Beach received the second-highest award – a Silver Flagler Award – in the "Creativity in Public Relations" category.

Visit Florida's annual Flagler Awards, which are open to all individuals, private businesses and not-for-profit organizations in Florida that promote tourism to and within the state, recognize creativity, innovation, product quality and effectiveness in 16 different categories.

The Hilton Sandestin Beach's entry – a series of YouTube "Beachside Reports with the H-Team" – was the second highest scoring entry in the "Creativity in Public Relations" category, which recognizes the creative implementation of a public relations tool, program or campaign.

"We're extremely honored by this award and proud of what it represents: our steadfast commitment to excellence and innovation," said Gary Brielmayer, general manager of the Hilton Sandestin Beach. "It's exciting to see our marketing and communication initiatives recognized at the state level, and we're very proud of our team."

The Hilton Sandestin Beach's marketing and communications team is led by Karen Cooksey, Director of Sales and Marketing, and made up of Nancy Stanley, Director of Marketing and Communications, and Valeria Lento, Communications Manager. The team launched the "Beachside Reports with the H-Team" series in July 2010 as a medium via which to address guest inquiries following the Deepwater Horizon incident.

Earlier this year, this Hilton Sandestin Beach initiative received an Image Award, Judges' Award, and Grand Image Award from the Florida Public Relations Association – Northwest Florida Coast Chapter. The association also selected Lento as the Crisis Communicator of the Year for her implementation of the strategy. In January, Hilton Hotels & Resorts awarded the Hilton Sandestin Beach with the brand's first "Best Social Media Engagement" award in the Americas region.

Visit Florida, the state's tourism marketing organization, established the Flagler Awards in 2000 to recognize outstanding tourism marketing. Working independently, a panel of five judges evaluated each entry. Based on the judges' cumulative scores, awards were presented to the top three entries in 16 different categories.

For more information on Hilton Sandestin Beach, call 850-267-9500, or visit www.HiltonSandestinBeach.com. Stay up-to-date on the hotel's latest news and promotions via its Blog, Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube.

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About the Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa

The Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa, managed by Sandcastle Resorts & Hotels, is located on the sugar-white sands and emerald-green waters of Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast in Destin, Fla. – one *Good Morning America's* "10 Most Beautiful Places in America", as well as one of Trip Advisor's "Top 25 U.S. Destinations" in 2011. Aside from its stunning location, Northwest Florida's largest full-service beachfront resort hotel boasts 598 spacious accommodations, more than 32,000 square feet of award-winning meeting space, a world-class spa and fitness center, five on-site dining venues – including a AAA Four-Diamond restaurant –abundant resort recreation options, access to championship golf courses, and close proximity to the area's best attractions. In spring 2011, it completed a \$6.5 million hotel-wide renovation that includes a new beachside restaurant, expanded beachfront decks, and renovated meeting spaces. For more information on Destin's premier hotel, visit www.HiltonSandestinBeach.com, or stay up-to-date with its latest news and promotions on its Blog, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.