

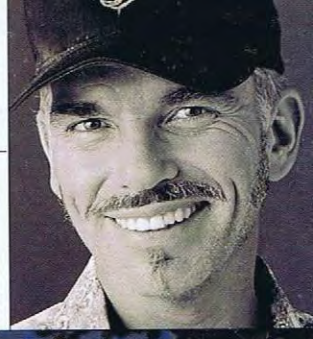
Sky

 Delta 

Julia Stiles
Capt. Clive Cussler
Michael Schumacher

Billy Bob Thornton **72**

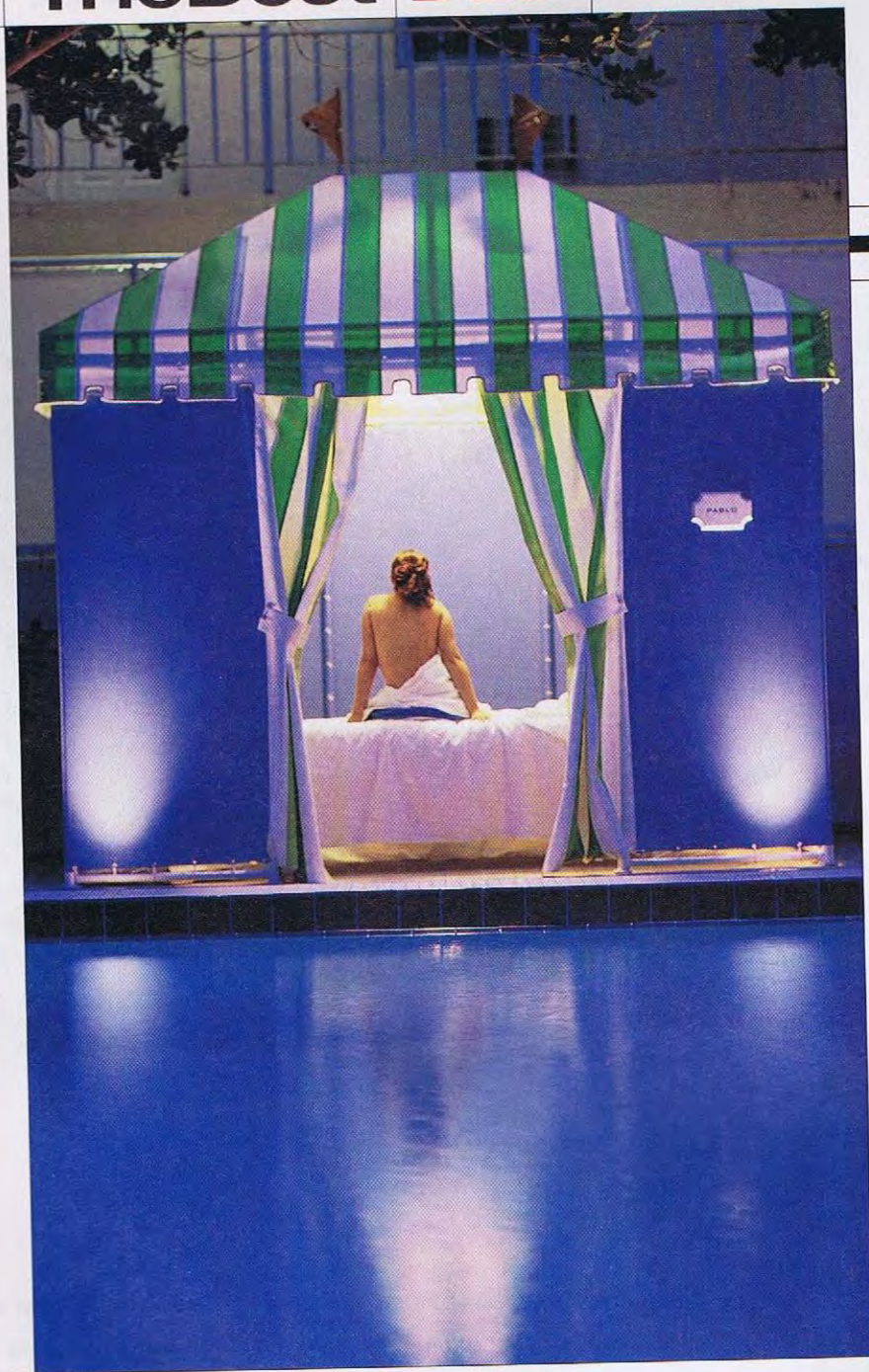
THE ACTOR-WRITER-DIRECTOR HAS HIS
BLADE OUT FOR HOLLYWOOD



Poolside Pleasures

A spa treatment at the Beach House in Miami Beach

↑ TheBest BED



Beach Party

ROOM 704 AT THE BEACH HOUSE
IN MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA

The first sign that the Beach House is a different kind of hotel is the receptionist's nametag. It reads, "Christopher. Virgo." The next is a painting with an absurdist line, "I never had a penny to my name, so I changed my name," stenciled across a baby blue background. Finally, a glass jar chock-full of home-baked cookies sits on the front-desk counter. The whimsical, even quirky stamp on this fledgling addition to the Miami Beach, Florida, hotel scene is a far cry from the hipper-than-thou minimalism of most Ocean Drive properties.

Perhaps the Beach House has the luxury of marching to a different drummer than the hotels of South Beach. It's five miles farther north, a stone's throw from the exclusive Bal Harbour shops, Miami's answer to L.A.'s Rodeo Drive. Room 704 will take you farther up and away: Perched on the top floor with an ocean view, it's the best in the house.

This is a hotel without an urban feel, despite the high-tech perks in Room 704: a T1 line for fast Internet access, a Sony PlayStation game unit, cordless phones, a CD player. Its ambience is beachy, breezy, comfortable and cozy. It's a place to feel at home in, and not worry about the sand on your feet.

But don't let the perky tone give the wrong impression. The Beach House is a first-class operation. I spend a satisfied session in the well-fitted gym off the lobby, have a massage in a fanciful tent abutting the pool and laze a few hours

in a hammock by the beach.

My comfortable bedroom furthers the illusion of a weekend at a friend's home, with magazines and books piled high on the coffee table (and Dr. Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat* by the bed), a bottle for shells you may find in long walks on the beach, and a small refrigerator you can stock with things you buy at the Pantry, a 24/7 general store near the lobby. —Roger Toll

Laid-Back Dining

Food guru Sheila Lukins, author of *The Silver Palate Cookbook* and others, created the menu for the Beach House's Atlantic Restaurant. "The cooking is in the best spirit of New American cuisine, comfortable and familiar, exactly the kind of food I like to make in my own beach house," she says. Lunch and dinner are excellent, but do not miss the scrumptious breakfast buffet: homemade granola and pastries, challah French toast, soft scrambled eggs, six juices, and on and on. Forget the mayhem of the South Beach dining scene; the Atlantic fits the laid-back attitude of the Beach House. Info: 305-695-7930.



www.RubellHotels.com

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