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With seven jaw-dropping properties from Spring Lake to Cape May, **ICONA Resorts** offers a range of hospitality options to help families make vacation memories that last a lifetime.

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Enjoying sun and sand at ICONA Diamond Beach

ICONA Summer

With seven jaw-dropping properties from Spring Lake to Cape May, **ICONA Resorts** offers a range of hospitality options to help families make vacation memories that last a lifetime. **by BILL DONAHUE**

Every summer, countless families from the Philadelphia area make the pilgrimage to the Jersey Shore to partake in the sun, sand, and surf. It's a rite of passage, of sorts, a tradition handed down from one generation to the next.

Caitlin Humienny had a much different experience. A native of the American Midwest, Humienny grew up on a farm surrounded by oceans of grain, not water. Even so, she knows the soul-soothing mystique of the Jersey Shore all too well. Her job as director of marketing for ICONA Resorts enables her to play a unique role in helping families make vacation memories that last a lifetime.

ICONA Resorts has quickly become synonymous with the Jersey Shore, with seven properties from Spring Lake to Cape May—and more to follow. Founded by Eustace Mita, a hotelier and real estate developer who has had a lifelong love affair with Avalon and other shore towns, ICONA prides itself on offering hospitality options to satisfy every taste, budget, and family size.

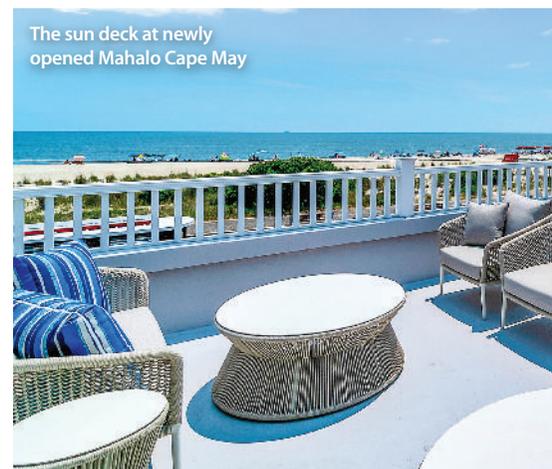
“Our name is our mission,” Humienny says. “The word *ICON* refers to a sacred place or thing, and the *A* stands for the aloha spirit of warmth, welcome, and love. We want each ICONA resort to be a place of peace, a sacred place, where guests feel welcome and can have a great experience.”

Each ICONA property falls under one of three distinct offerings: ICONA Resorts, offering an upscale, full-service experience in which guests never have to leave the resort if they do not wish to do so; ICONA Boutique Collection, which provides the same upscale design and service with different on-site amenities; and Mahalo, a sister brand inspired by the Hawaiian islands, offering families an experience that is both memorable and more affordable.

ICONA Resorts includes three properties in Avalon and Wildwood Crest (ICONA Avalon, ICONA Windrift, and ICONA Diamond Beach). ICONA Boutique Collection includes the Grand Victorian Spring Lake and ICONA Cape May. Mahalo Diamond Beach in Wild-

wood Crest debuted last summer, while Mahalo Cape May opened its doors to its first guests in mid-June.

“Our Mahalo properties have exterior corridors that contribute to the breezy, island-inspired feel,” Humienny says. “The island-inspired interiors have a lot of woods, tropical plants, and natural elements, and our Diamond Beach location even has a macaw named Maui that our guests love. We have some other exciting things for Mahalo guests: bicycles for their daily use, a sun deck where they can see the ocean, an outdoor heated pool, beach chair service—everything you can want in a beachfront property.



The sun deck at newly opened Mahalo Cape May



Condo living at ICONA Windrift



The ICONA Yacht

“At Mahalo Cape May, we also have a nice lawn area with tables and a big grill area,” she continues. “For those who do want to go out and dine, we also offer a Mahalo shuttle service. Cape May has so many restaurants, wineries, and distilleries, as well as art, culture, and museums; it’s a year-round town. The plan for Mahalo Cape May is to be seasonal, but it could be year-round if we see the demand for it.”

To her point, time down the shore is not necessarily limited to the summer months. Three of the four ICONA Resorts are open year-round—ICONA Windrift being the excep-



tion—for guests who prefer the calmness of “cozy season,” which is ICONA’s term for months typically considered off-season.

Dining options abound even when the surrounding towns have gone sleepy. For example, ICONA Avalon offers the Avalon Brew Pub, which Humienny describes as “the only beachfront brewpub on the East Coast,” and the Sandbar Village Beach Bar and Lounge, which offers live entertainment.

“At ICONA Diamond Beach, we have the Star Beach Bar, which is a unique restaurant on a private beach,” she adds. “We bring in palm trees and a nice summer entertainment lineup, which you can enjoy while looking right at the ocean and enjoying a brick-oven pizza, a cocktail, or a selection from our lineup of local beers. It’s a great atmosphere.”

Each ICONA property is unique, though all share some commonalities. All ICONA guests can expect to benefit from pristine accommodations, extremely friendly service, and easy access to the restorative joys of fresh air, early morning beach walks, and time spent by the water.

“Each week at each property, the entire team comes together—everybody—and has a culture meeting to reinforce everything we care about and stand for,” Humienny says. “Getting together each week allows us to review these principles, read reviews, and talk about how to better serve our guests.”

Given the Jersey Shore’s status as a “generational vacation spot,” ICONA is happy to accommodate larger and multigenerational families who wish to vacation together. ICONA Windrift, for example, offers 10 three- and four-bedroom condominiums, while Mahalo Cape May boasts three two-story townhomes (three-night minimum).

“The rental market for single-family homes has been so intense, so beachfront homes [for rent] are not as attainable as they once were,” Humienny says. “With our large-family accommodations, families can enjoy beachfront properties that have a lot of perks



Fine dining at ICONA Windrift, and a fresh pour from Avalon Brew Pub at ICONA Avalon

you’re probably not going to find by renting someone’s home.”

ICONA guests have the opportunity to see the Jersey Shore from a different perspective by way of the ICONA Yacht. The 38-foot yacht, which comes equipped with Sea-keeper stabilization to prevent seasickness, can accommodate as many as six guests. Charters depart from the Stone Harbor Marina.

“Captain Rocco does two-hour charters around the back bay, and for three hours or more you can take it out into the ocean and all the way down to Cape May,” Humienny says. “Some people rent it just for leisure, with opportunities to stop at sandbars or get out and swim. Others want to mark a milestone of some kind, like celebrating a college graduation or commemorating a big life event.”

Humienny anticipates another banner summer at ICONA properties, with 2023 bookings for most months pacing ahead of previous years. Going forward, she says ICONA intends to broaden its already sizeable footprint with more striking Mahalo and ICONA-branded properties.

“Your vacation is our vocation,” she says. “You have to love people to be in hospitality, and we trust our team members to maintain an upbeat, happy, loving culture. When the people around you are happy and love their jobs, you can feel it. We work hard to keep our team members happy so our guests are happy, and that’s true across every [ICONA] property.” ■



For more information about ICONA Resorts, visit icona.com or mahaloresorts.com.