

suburban life

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pg. 24

Ocean Rental Group, a family-run venture led by Kasey Stenella and her husband, Jim, helps families make lasting memories at some of the country's most sought-after coastal vacation destinations.
pg. 40

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PARTNER PROFILE

Unforgettable Getaways

Ocean Rental Group, a family-run venture led by Kasey Stenella and her husband, Jim, helps families make lasting memories at some of the country's most sought-after coastal vacation destinations.

BY **BILL DONAHUE**

Some of Kasey Stenella's fondest childhood memories are of winters spent in the Florida Keys, where her family vacationed for more than a decade. Her husband, Jim, shares that same love for the coast, having grown up spending his summers in Ocean City, New Jersey.

"For two weeks every year it was just me, my brother, my two sisters, and my parents," Kasey recalls of those childhood trips to the Keys. "My parents had their own restaurant in Kingston, New York, and they worked very hard, including long hours. Those trips were special to me because you could see them relax and not worry about anything. Their stress and anxieties would disappear, and we would just focus on being together as a family.



Kasey and Jim Stenella

"If you've never been to the middle Keys, they're the complete opposite of Key West," she continues. "It has a very chill vibe. Every day you get up, you go fishing, you come back and relax. Everything slows down. It's like being on island time. My family would walk down to Bud N' Mary's Marina every day to see the fishermen come in with their catch. Even now, whenever Jim and I drive down, I make him



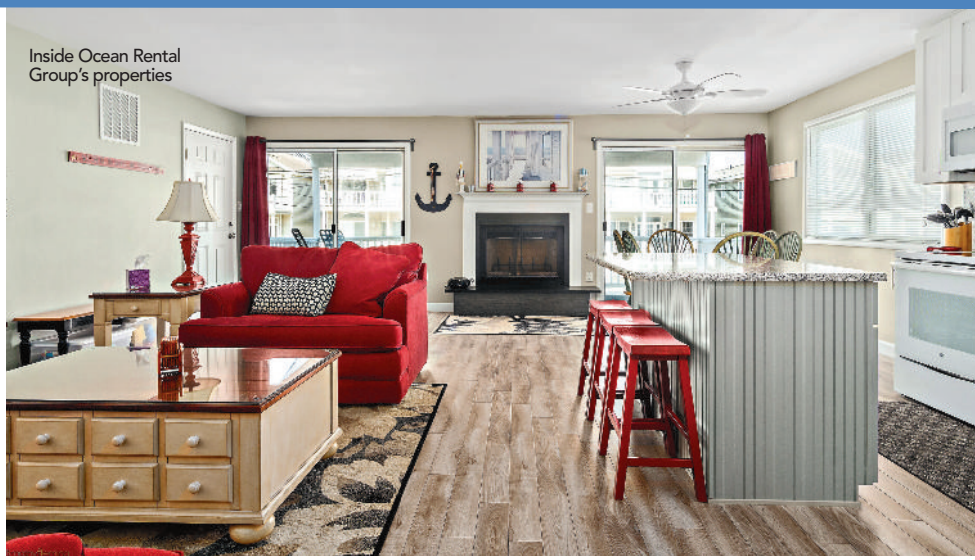
stop at Bud N' Mary's. It takes me back to being a kid."

Now, through Ocean Rental Group, Kasey loves helping other families discover and enjoy the same special vacation spots that have brought her and Jim so many wonderful memories.

Ocean Rental Group has three properties in Ocean City, a block from the beach and ideally located to the boardwalk, as well as two in the South Florida city of Marathon, nestled between Islamorada and Bahia Honda in the Florida Keys. While the Stenellas stay at each of the properties a few weeks out of the year, the properties are available to renters year-round.

In Ocean City, summers fill up quickly—Kasey recommends booking a full year in advance—though the off-season offers significantly more availability. Guests must book a minimum of seven nights in peak season, and at least three nights in the off-season. In Marathon, a minimum stay of seven nights is required. Only a handful of weeks book out a year in advance, including lobster mini-season and the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. The good news: Given the tropical location, the weather in Marathon stays more or less constant all year long.

"When people book with us, they're working directly with myself and Jim, and we're always happy to help make their stay a great experience," says Kasey, who studied business at The State University of New York at Albany. "Hospitality is in our blood. When you grow up in a family business, you learn very quickly how to make people feel special. We're not some big corporate entity, so our renters never have to worry about being passed off to someone else. We pride ourselves on personal communication. When someone reaches out with a question, I do my best to respond right away. I know how much people appreciate a quick, personal response; I know I do!"



Inside Ocean Rental Group's properties



Guests have several options to book one of Ocean Rental Group's properties, including through all the major vacation-booking platforms. That said, Kasey encourages going directly through Ocean Rental Group in order to save money on service and booking fees. She may also be able to offer discounted rates for booking direct. In addition, she recommends following Ocean Rental Group on Instagram (@ocean.rental.group) and Facebook (@Sea Forever at Vaca Cove) to take advantage of specials, promotions, and last-minute deals.

The Stenellas, who bought their first Ocean City property in 2006, are always scouting for more properties to add to the mix so they—and their renters—can make the most of their travels. Two potential destinations for property number six: either Saint John in the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Anna Maria Island, a barrier island on the Gulf Coast in Florida's Manatee County.

"No matter where we go next, it has to be near water, because water is Jim's emotional support animal," Kasey jokes. "He's a huge fisherman, just like my father. It will also be a place we know reasonably well, because it's not as much fun to manage the day to day if I don't know the area. If you need a recommendation for a fishing charter, or a restaurant, or something to do on a rainy day, I get excited helping people figure out their itineraries.

"We started this business as a way for us to buy a house in Ocean City, where we loved to spend time, and it has snowballed from there," she continues. "Of course, we love having homes in places that mean so much to our family, but what's been even more rewarding is helping other families create their own memories in places that have brought us so much happiness over the years. One of my favorite parts is seeing the same families come back year after year, knowing they're making new memories and traditions of their own." ■



Known for its concierge-level service, Ocean Rental Group can recommend fishing charters, restaurants, and rainy-day activities to help renters figure out their itineraries.

Photos courtesy of Ocean Rental Group

Ocean Rental Group

For more information about Ocean Rental Group, including details about each of its properties in New Jersey and Florida, visit oceanrentalgroup.com or call (215) 453-8490 ext. 104. Follow Ocean Rental Group on Instagram, @ocean.rental.group, and Facebook, @Sea Forever at Vaca Cove.