

Plane favourites

Delta Air Lines flight attendant Val Kegel has flown to Grand Cayman from Atlanta, Georgia, three times a week for the past four years.

An honorary ambassador for Cayman Islands Tourism Association, Val hands out fun fact sheets to her passengers.

Earlier this year she also started her own website *passengerpicks.com* with tips on what to see, do and eat in Cayman.

"I love so many aspects of Cayman including the beautiful beaches, incredible sunsets, the pristine underwater beauty, especially the sea turtles," says Val. "I became a certified diver at age 54 to swim with those sweet turtles. Cayman has some of the finest dining in the world but if I had to limit it (the things about Cayman that I love) to just one choice, I would say it's the people.

"Because of the nature of my job I have the opportunity to fly to many Caribbean destinations. To be honest, most islands offer many of the same things, but it's the people of Cayman that make the difference."

VAL'S ANECDOTES:

- ★ Bruno from *Guy Harvey's* cuts a notch in the fin of the fish he chooses from the market to ensure he receives the same fish so his guests get the freshest seafood.
- ★ Arie from *Cobalt Coast* gets up at 5am every morning to make sure his diving guests get a full breakfast fresh from the grill... no assembly line.

- ★ Gunter from *Lobster Pot*, where the restaurant caught fire on Thanksgiving Day 2011, pulled a small team of chefs together to serve guests at *Taste of Cayman* a couple of months later, in spite of his bad fortune.
- ★ Ercole from *La Dolce Vita* orders flour from Italy to make his homemade pasta every day because he is so committed to making

everything fresh.

- ★ Ron at *Tukka* never lets anyone leave his restaurant without a hug and a picture. He has in his lobby a fish tank of lionfish/lobsters so he can educate children and families.
- ★ Tony at *Casanova* makes you feel like family as soon as you enter the door and you'll feel you're Italian by the end of the evening.

THESE ARE DINING RECOMMENDATIONS VAL HAS COMPILED FROM HER PASSENGERS.

- Best family friendly **Sunshine Grill, Tiki Beach, Periwinkle**
- Most cost effective **Chicken! Chicken!, Duke's Seafood and Ribs Shack, Italian Kitchen, Guy Harvey's** \$9.99 special
- Best brunch **Agua, Westin, Luca**
- Best lunch **Black Trumpet, Abacus, Morgans Harbour, Michael's Genuine, Cracked Conch**
- Best breakfast **Cimboco, Tim-Buc-Tuu, Eats, Icoa** (best upscale breakfast)
- Best seafood **Agua, Calypso Grill, Luca**
- Best steak **Copper Falls, Prime**
- Best local **Champion House, Heritage Kitchen, Seymour's Jerk Centre.**
- Best Italian **Ragazzi, La Dolce Vita, Casanova**
- Best Mexican **Agave Grill**
- Best French **Guy Harvey**
- Best ocean front **Tukka, Osetra Bay, La Dolce Vita**
- Most romantic **Osetra Bay**
- Best sports bar **KARoo, Legendz, Dog House, Coconut Joes**
- Best bar and grill **Tiki Beach, Calico Jacks, Sunshine Grill, Kaibo Bar & Grill**
- Best sushi **Bamboo**
- Best Wine List **Luca**
- Best Farm to Table **The Brasserie**
- Best Thai **Thai Orchid**
- Best happy hour **Macabuca, Breezes by the Bay, KARoo**
- Most unique dining experience **Roland's Garden**
- Best dessert **Tukka: Chocolate Walnut Pudding, Calypso Grill: Sticky Toffee Pudding**
- Best healthy fast food **Al La Kebab**
- Best lobster **Lobster Pot, Deckers, Tukka**
- Best lionfish **Guy Harvey's, Tukka, Cobalt Coast** (by Chef Dora)
- Best foodie event **Ortanique: Full Moon Pig Roast**

