

Gulfshore Life

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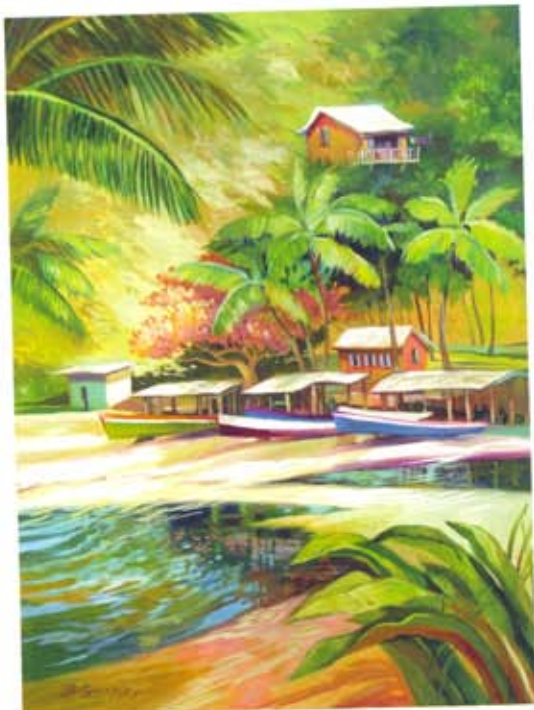
PERSON OF INTEREST

The Art of Seeing

PAINTER AND AUTHOR **DIANA GESSLER** CAPTURES THE COLORFUL DETAILS OF GULFSHORE LIVING.

By Shellie Benson

Photograph by Vanessa Rogers



Under the Flamboyan Tree



Very New Orleans



Fifth Avenue Naples

Hometown: Long Beach, Calif. **Naples home:** Bonita Springs. **Occupation:** painter, author. **Family stuff:** married to Paul for 30 years, with three stepdaughters and three step-grandchildren. **Front and center:** She painted this month's cover, *Another Day in Paradise*, a 20-by-24-inch oil painting, commissioned by *Gulfshore Life*. **Career**

gal: She worked as a graphic artist for 30 years before transitioning to fine arts in the early 1990s.

Current showing: Shaw Gallery, Naples. **Passion turned into art:** On her many travels, she kept a journal of drawings, paintings, sketches and tidbits of information that have turned into a series of books, *Very California*, *Very Charleston*, *Very New Orleans* and next, *Very Washington, D.C.*, published by Algonquin Books. **Traveling artist:** "We travel more slowly than most people, and we see things others may not see. We always say, 'We may not see every church in the village, but the one we do see, we see very well.'" **Most inspirational locale:** Provence, France. **Funny font:** A typeface, Dinkle, was created from her handwriting for her books.

Her invention: She has a U.S. patent for Lap-Line, a tethered swimming belt used to add resistance. **Favorite**

color: "I don't think you can paint without purple. But lime green is my favorite color to date." **Painting style:** whimsical and cheerful. "I don't do anything dark." **Proudest moment:** As the guest artist for the 2004 Naples Winter Wine Fest, her painting, *Fantasy Vineyard*, auctioned for \$75,000. **Guiltiest pleasure:** "Eating the entire bowl of Paul's parmesan sprinkled, buttered popcorn while watching a West Virginia football game." **So Paul's the cook?** "He does all the grocery shopping, cooking and cleaning up so I can work. I figure he saves me about six hours every day." **Upcoming project:** Using her Very book style, she is creating a 100-year history book about an Indonesian family. **When her art sells:** "I'm happy when a painting goes to a good home. And when I see it later, it's like greeting an old friend."



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