

# Captain's Lunch Log

ART BY DIANA GESSLER



## Cabbage Key

Boating time from Naples at 20 knots: About three hours; 239-283-2278

This slice of Old Florida is accessible only by helicopter, seaplane, boat, or by scheduled shuttle from Pine Island or Captiva Island. Dine *afresco* on one of two screened porches, either with a view of Pine Island Sound or sheltered by an enormous, and no doubt ancient, tree at this home built in the 1930s by the family of playwright and novelist Mary Roberts Rinehart. Rustic? Yes. The island first got electricity in 1983. Dollar bills decorate the walls and ceilings in a tradition started when 100 fishing shacks on pilings dotted the sound. In an early form of basking, successful fishermen would leave money on the wall with their name on it to use when their take wasn't so good. Now, bills are signed and taped to the walls by visitors. As they fall off, they are donated to charity, amounting to about \$10,000 a year. This fact is one of 10 enumerated on staff-designed T-shirts that address the most-often asked questions. Lunch is casual — fish sandwiches, homemade Key lime pie and cheeseburgers made famous by Jimmy Buffet, who says his song "Cheeseburger in Paradise" rhapsodizes the island fare, but no fries. Without a fire department, a fryer would be risky. After lunch, follow nature trails through the island, or climb the water tower for a view of the sound, and if you are lucky, the canopy of poinciana trees in bloom. Overnight guests at the lodge or one of several charming cottages can experience a gourmet evening meal. Many servers return every season and live in staff housing on the island.

## Gamma Dot's Seaside Saloon, Sanibel Island

Boating time from Naples at 20 knots: About two hours, accessible by car; 239-472-8138

This 58-seat (11 seats are at the bar), tin-roofed, open-air restaurant pulses at the Sanibel Island Marina, with a 40-

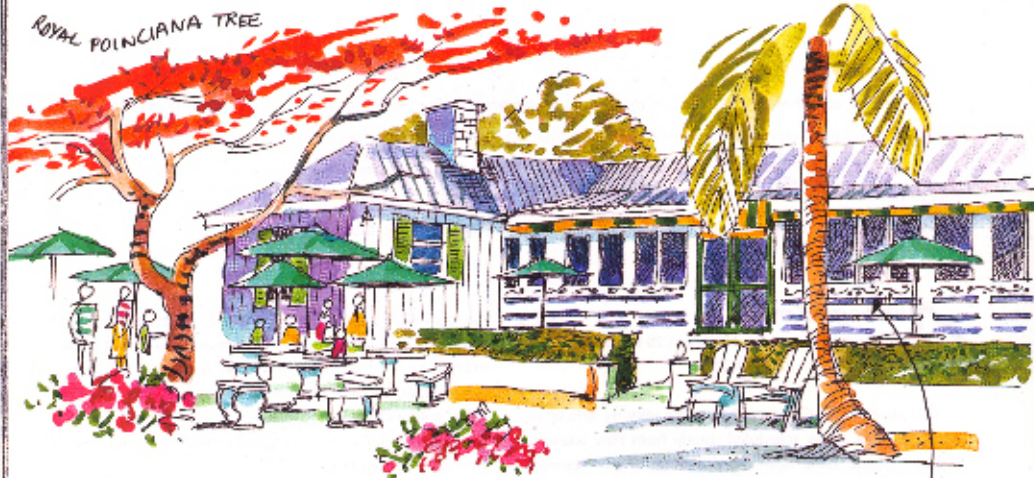
minute wait not uncommon, even after 1 p.m. (Be prepared to linger; they do not take reservations.) With homemade everything — distinctive sauces for fresh seafood including grouper, coconut shrimp, fried oysters and crab meatballs, potato chips and Key lime pie — it's worth the wait. The 45-year-old restaurant was opened by marina owner Myton Ireland and named after his boating, shooting, dancing and pool-playing grandmother, who came to Sanibel Island before there was a bridge. When the restaurant first opened, Dot made the pies. Now serving 500 meals a day — each garnished with an edible orchid and often served by staff that has been around since nearly the beginning — the restaurant is a popular destination for boaters and landlubbers alike. New this season: Ireland's three peacocks — à la Fisher Island. The birds, which were a gift from his daughter, roan and rule the property.

## Backwater Nick's, Isles of Capri

Boating time from Naples at 20 knots: Less than an hour; accessible by car; 239-642-5700

As a driver, you've probably gone past the turnoff to Isles of Capri on the way to Marco Island and vowed to check it out, but if you are an area boater, you likely already know where it is. This popular chickee dining destination is another where kicking back is the order of the day, with a nearly constant wait list kept efficient by beepers. But you couldn't ask for a nicer setting to wait, with benches and tables scattered along the water, and entertainment offered as diners arrive by boat and attempt to dock, while observers weigh in with their unsolicited advice from afar. Sandy, our veteran server, told us the restaurant itself has "been around forever," and she has been serving for some six years, about as long as the restaurant and Tarpon Club Marina have been owned by Fiddler's Creek. If you are a resident, you can be a member of the Tarpon Club, the only ones allowed to make reservations at the busy, more than 180-seat seafood center. Exotic drinks and seafood dominate the menu and are served quickly.

ROYAL POINCIANA TREE



# Cabbage Key



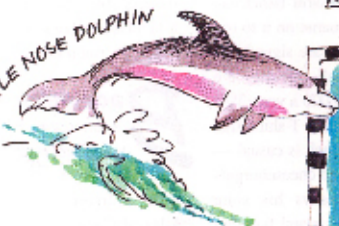
## FISHING SHACK

IN THE EARLY 1900S THE PUNTA GORDA FISHING COMPANY BUILT THESE SHACKS IN PINE ISLAND SOUND. ONLY A FEW REMAIN.



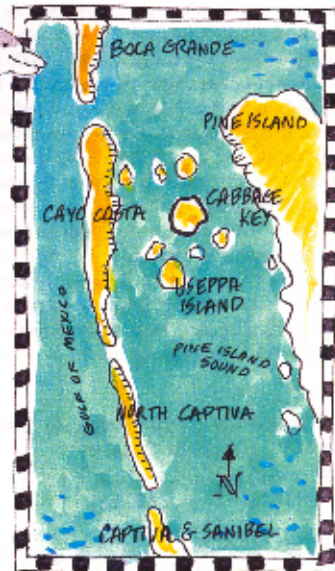
ROYAL POINCIANA BLOSSOM

BOTTLE NOSE DOLPHIN



MIR. & MRS. OSPREY AT HOME.

DETAIL OF BOARD WITH GRAPE VINE CUTOUT.

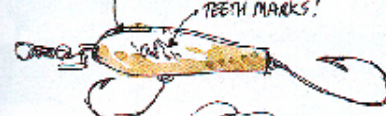


THE DOLLAR BILL BAR ISN'T THE ONLY PLACE PASTERED WITH MONEY. \$100 BILLS ARE SIGNED & MASKING-TAPED EVERYWHERE!

← JAMES A. BAKER, SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY WAS HERE & SIGNED ONE AGAIN!

## ANTIQUE TARPON LURE

PORCELAIN JIG



(ICE COLD)

KEY LIME PIE



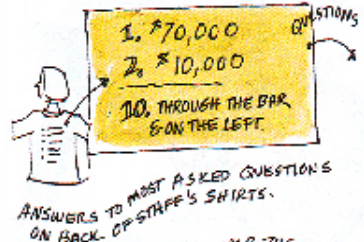
## CHEESEBURGER IN PARADISE

SIMONY BUFFET SAYS HE WROTE THAT SONG HERE!



## BLACK BEANS & RICE

## CABBAGE CREEPER



ANSWERS TO MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ON BACK OF STAFF'S SHIRTS.



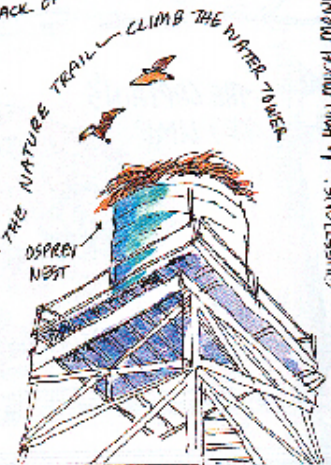
LOCALS CALL THIS "SWAMP WATER"



WATCH FOR MANATEES ~ FOLLOW THE MALLARDS ~ MEANDER



SEA GRAPE LEAF

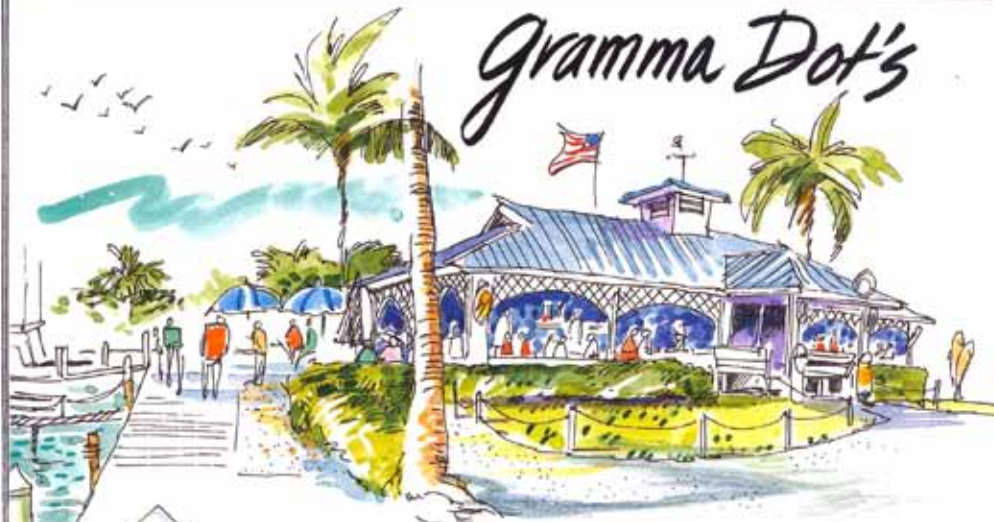


OSPREY NEST

NATURE TRAIL ~ CLIMB THE WATER TOWER

QUESTIONS: 1. HOW MUCH MONEY IS ON THE WALLS? 2. HOW MUCH FALLS EACH YEAR? 10. WHERE'S THE BATHROOM?

# Gramma Dot's



COME BY BOAT OR BICYCLE.



AN EDIBLE ORCHID ON EVERY PLATE!

LET THEM EAT ORCHIDS!



FLYING SEAGULL VANE



HOME MADE POTATO CHIPS

THE CAPTAIN'S KEY LIME PIE



SEST OF KEY LIME.



WINDSURFING ALONG THE SANIBEL CAUSEWAY



ALL KINDS OF FISH JUST HANGING AROUND.

MOTHER GET ME A BEER

FRAN, SONNY & AMY HUNT "ALL MY MARBLES"

DOT STEARNS "MARJELLA"

JOHN NAUMAN "TAN QUERAY"

BRASS PLAQUES CLIMB WALLS AND BORDER SHELVES — SYMBOLIZING DONATIONS TO A LOCAL CHARITY.

GRAMMA DOT DISCOVERED SANIBEL ON THIS BOAT.



TEDDY, THE PEACOCK, WATCHING HIS GIRLFRIENDS.

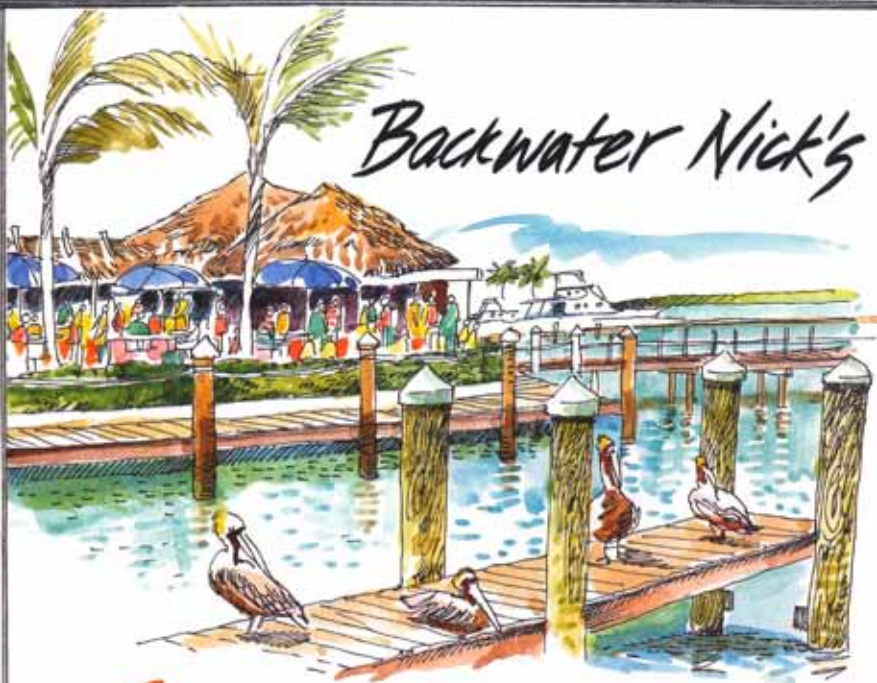
ONE OF MANY FANTASY SCULPTURES.



APPETIZER SAMPLER



# Backwater Nick's



NIGHT LIGHT



RESERVED SIGN ON CENTERPIECE

WASH CLOTH NAPKINS



SOUP IN A BOX



FIESTA WARE & PLASTIC PLATES

IF YOU LIVE AT ADDLER'S CREEK & BELONG TO THE TARPON CLUB - YOU CAN MAKE RESERVATIONS.



BRIGHTLY COLORED FLATWARE



MEMBERS ONLY DOCK HERE - BUT STILL PLENTY OF PUBLIC DOCKING.



TURTLE ICE CREAM PIE

TIPSY TURTLE



VDKA  
WHITE RUM  
DARK RUM  
COCONUT RUM  
BANANA LIQUEUR  
PINEAPPLE JUICE  
ORANGE JUICE  
GRENADINE



Chickee Hot

TO SEMINOLE & MICCOSUKEE TRIBES, "CHICKEE" MEANS "HOUSE" ROOF MADE WITH SABAL PALM FRONDS.



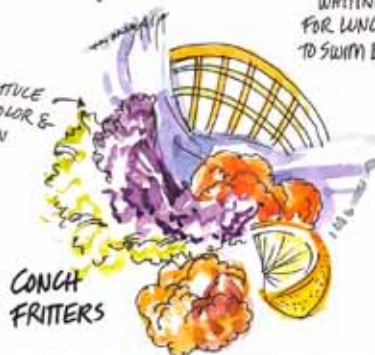
KEY LIME PIE



LADIES IN WAITING

BROWN PELICAN WAITING FOR LUNCH TO SWIM BY.

FANCY LETTUCE ADDS COLOR & FUN



CONCH FRITTERS

