In search of the perfect holiday hideaway

The perfect holiday hideaway may not even exist - but we can dream, can't we?

Many pleasure-seekers would dream (especially in January) of a sunny tropical island with long white beaches and the ceaseless crashing and sighing of the sea.

They probably recognize, though, that certain Caribbean islands have problems that spoil the dream, such as unfinished hotels, sky-high prices in restaurants and bars, and perhaps a less than friendly attitude toward outsiders.

Growing numbers of snowbirds seem to be coming to the realization that there are tropic-like islands on the near side of the Tropic of Cancer, where lower prices prevail.

A glance at the map of Florida shows a string of islands just off the mainland in the central part of the state's Atlantic seaboard, and a smaller group of islands in the southwest of the state near Fort Myers and the Gulf of Mexico.

East or west, Florida's coastal islands offer the visitor a broad range of accommodation, restaurants, sightseeing and shopping - all of it in that special insular environment, and yet relatively close at hand.

WINTER RETREAT

On the eastern side, much of Florida's coast is separated from the Atlantic by the Intracoastal Waterway (a chain of rivers and lakes), to the east of which is a string of low-lying barrier islands that come close to achieving the ideal of a winter retreat, whether the vacationer wants total relaxation or prefers such activities as fishing and boating.

The crossroads of the waterways is the fast-growing city of Stuart, some 55 km north of glitzy, ritzy Palm Beach. (One reason for its rapid growth is that it was linked to busy Interstate 95 only a year or so ago. Gossip is that the Stuart-to-Palm Beach section of 1-95 had been left unfinished for years, so that most drivers would pay to use the near-by Florida's Turnpike, a

toll road). Stuart has not only one of the few inlets connecting the Intracoastal Waterway with the Atlantic, but it's also at the eastern end of a waterway that stretches across the state (through Lake Okeechobee) to Fort Myers and the Gulf of Mex-CO.

IDYLLIC ISLAND A lift-bridge connects Stuart to

idyllic Hutchinson Island. Older local residents can remember when the island could be reached only by boat, and they still recall the island's role in the rumrunning trade of the Prohibition

(Local boat-owner William Mc-Coy bought whisky in the Bahamas, and transshipped it to New York. Unlike other bootleggers, he didn't water down his liquor, which thus became known as "the real McCoy" - or so the legend has it.)

Development of Hutchinson Island is being carefully controlled and monitored by local authorities, to ensure that it retains its "old Florida" character while providing facilities for the inevitably expanding number of visitors. One restriction, for instance, is that buildings may be no more than four storeys high.

That might have stumped some entrepreneurs, but Radnor Corp. (a subsidiary of Sun Oil Co.) succeeded in creating a pleasing, 200acre resort, Indian River Plantation, at the southern end of the island. Its centrepiece is a 200room low-rise hotel, which opened just a year ago and already has won the American Automobile Association's four-diamond award.

The resort combines the hotel with a condominium complex - an unusual pairing elsewhere, although not in Florida. The site's golf course, 13 tennis courts, five restaurants and marina are accessible to hotel guests and condominium occupants alike.

SPANISH TREASURE The Indian River Plantation's 500-metre-long Atlantic beach is part of Hutchinson Island's Treasure Coast, so named because of the booty that has been washed ashore over the years, from sunken Spanish galleons on the sea bottom some 550 metres offshore.

As recently as last August, an estimated \$240 million in gold and artifacts was discovered a few hundred metres out to sea. Every now and then, a lucky beachcomber finds a gold doubloon washed up onto the Treasure Coast beach.

On the other side of Florida, some 200 kilometres south of Tampa, the tides of the Gulf of Mexico constantly deposit seashells on the beaches of Sanibel and Captiva islands - less valuable than Spanish gold, perhaps, but far more numerous (more than 400 species of shells can be found there).

Travel Outlook

As on Hutchinson Island on the Atlantic side, the atmosphere at Sanibel and Captiva is gentle and the development restrained. A recently opened condominium, Pointe Santo de Sanibel, looks out over the Gulf waters from a height of no more than four stories, and a respectful distance back from the beach and its myriad of shells.

NATURE RESERVE

Visitors to these Gulf islands should drive through the 5,000-acre "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel, to see several unusual species of birds; admission is free. (Indian River Planta-

tion on the Atlantic side is also a stopping-off place for large numbers of migrating birds that follow either salt water or river routes).

Another recommendation: In Fort Myers on the Florida mainland across from the islands, visit the winter home of inventor Thomas Edison (1847-1931), set in a beautiful 14-acre garden, where his early laboratory may be visited; the home is open daily except Sunday morning.

The Hutchinson Island counterpart of the Edison home is the museum dedicated to Sterling

Elliott (1852-1922), displaying some of the hundreds of inventions that he patented such as the quadricycle, the addressing machine and the first knot-tying machine; the museum is open every afternoon.

Indian River Plantation is at 555 N.E. Ocean Blvd., Hutchinson Island, Stuart, FL, 34996, telephone 800-327-4873 or 305-225-3700.

For further information on Sanibel and Captiva, contact Lee County Tourism Development Council, P.O. Box 2445, Fort Myers, FL, 33902, telephone 813-335-2631.



AWAY our current stock of Canadiana Snowblowers and Snowthrowers all at DEALER COST! Hurry in! Our prices will never be any lower!



ON ALL MODELS 4 HP DUAL-STAGE 20" MODEL CN 420T (TRACK)

 4 HP Tecumseh Snow King Engine 20° clearing width

Duel "Trac-Drive" system for unequalled grip

and traction Mechanical weight transfer system

 Spiral carbon steer auger Separate traction à suger safety clutches 6 forward, 2 reverse speeds

Light kit (#9574) optional

NOW ONLY \$649°° Plus PDL Freight & Taxes,

List Price

\$899.00

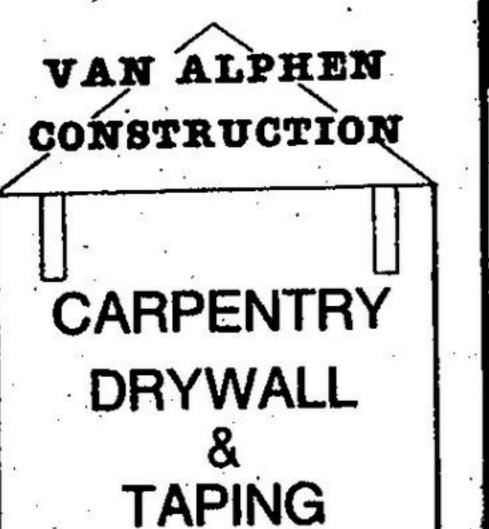


Texas begins 800 telephone number for Canada

(NC)—Canadians planning a visit to Texas may now receive the state's free promotional travel package by calling Texas' new toll-free number for Canada --- 1-800-MEET-TEX (633-8839).

"Our toll-free telephone number will appear in all promotional advertising that the Tourism Division places with Canadian publications," said J. William Lauderback, executive director for the Texas Department of Commerce. "We are confident that this new service

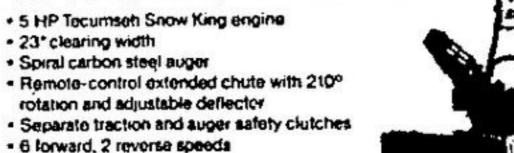
will help persuade more Canadian vacationers and business travelers tochoose Texas as their destination."



877-5940

Persons calling 1-800-MEET-TEX will be asked for their name and address for use in shipping promotional materials on Texas, Operators will not offer travel counselling. Telephone travel counseling is available by calling (512)463-8971, which carries regular long-distance charges.

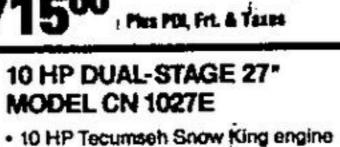




5 HP DUAL-STAGE 23" MODEL CN 523

Preumatic tires with chains Electric starter (#97233) and light kit (#9574) **NOW ONLY List Price *999****

*71500 ME POL FIL & TELE 10 HP DUAL-STAGE 27"



. 18" pneumatic tires with chains Electric starter installed Other specifications as per Model CN 827 List Price \$1499**



B HP DUAL-STAGE 27" MODEL CN 827DE (DELUXE) . B HP Tecumsen Snow King engine 27" cleaning width 16" dia, carbon steet auger with sarrated culting edges

Remote-control extended chute with 210° rotation and panel-mounted deflector control Separate traction and auger safety clutches 6 forward, 2 reverse speeds - Headlight and electric starter installed

HOW ONLY List Price



12 HP DUAL-STAGE 33"... MODEL CN 1233DE

 12 HP Tecumseh Overhead Valve Engine 33° clearing width Other specifications as per Model CN 827DE

List Price "1899"



