

PRESCRIBING PARADISE - AN APPOINTMENT WITH DR. BEACH

# GULFSCAPES

FINER GULF COAST LIVING

sun safe fashions from **Coolibar**

exploring **Texas** coral reefs  
with **Jesse Cancelmo**

meet **Louisiana** seafood king  
**Chef Landry** of Galatoire's

get hitched on a **Biloxi** schooner

\$5.95 US VOL. 8, No. 28



074470563006  
AUGUST ISSUE 2008

WWW.GULFSCAPES.COM

## off the beaten path

Several upscale waterfront developments are taking place in the Seadrift/Port O'Connor/Port Lavaca area. These include Swan Point Landing, The Sanctuary at Costa Grande, Bay Harbour, and Bay Club at Falcon Point Ranch. Each of these developments uses the natural beauty and resources of this pristine area to attract homeowners.



## PORT O'CONNOR, SEADRIFT AND PORT LAVACA DEVELOPING QUICKLY NATURAL BEAUTIES

Located between Galveston and Corpus Christi, the Port O'Connor/Seadrift/Port Lavaca area features some of the finest sport fishing, birding and hunting in the Lone Star State. The towns are on a peninsula bounded on the north side by Lavaca and Matagorda Bays, on the east by Espiritu Santo Bay, and on the south by San Antonio Bay.

Seadrift was established in 1848. It began an expansion around 1909, when a railway came in and a channel was dredged to give access to the Intracoastal Waterway, which allowed easy shipping of goods and resulting good fortune. Seadrift is still a self-described “shy little town”, focused on the fishing industry, farming and chemical plants.

Port O'Connor was established as a town in 1912. Its boom occurred between 1909 and 1919, when excursion trains arrived on weekends bringing in an estimated 10,000 tourists every summer. Port O'Connor has experienced growth recently, fueled by tourism, commercial fisheries and the oil industry.

The Port Lavaca area was visited by Europeans as early as 1519, when the first Spanish explorers navigated the numerous bays in the area. The ship of the French explorer LaSalle, the La Belle, was uncovered in nearby Matagorda Bay in 1995, and artifacts from the ship are on display in the area museum. Port Lavaca is home today of a thriving fishing industry and oil related businesses.

Seadrift, Port O'Connor and Port Lavaca have legendary fishing. Seadrift is located on San Antonio Bay, while Port O'Connor is on Matagorda Bay, and Port Lavaca is on Lavaca Bay. All three towns have access to the Gulf of Mexico via Pass Cavallo, a natural cut in

the nearby barrier islands. This makes for quick trips to the Gulf for sport fish, such as red snapper, kingfish, ling and jack fish, plus deep-water fishing for sailfish, marlin, tuna, dolphin and wahoo. There's no need to go out into the Gulf to find fish, however, since Seadrift, Port O'Connor and Port Lavaca have the largest and deepest bay system on the Texas Gulf Coast. Matagorda Bay, Espiritu Santo Bay, Lavaca Bay and San Antonio Bay are full of redfish, flounder, pompano, drum, jack crevalle, shark, tarpon and Spanish mackerel.

Every summer Port O'Connor plays host to a variety of bay and offshore fishing tournaments. The summer opens with the Port O'Connor Offshore Tournament (POOT) targeting king mackerel, ling and dolphin, and is headquartered at The Fishing Center. June is also the host month of the Pescado Grande tournament. July tournaments include the Cula Roja, Victoria Home Builders and Poco Bueno. Poco Bueno is the number one offshore tournament in Texas. August is the month for the Muske Tournament and the American Business Women's Association La Pesca Chica.

In addition to fishing, Seadrift, Port O'Connor and Port Lavaca have excellent duck and goose hunting. Those who like to view birds, but without a gun, will find world-class bird watching at nearby Matagorda Island, The Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, and several other areas that are home to more bird species than any other place in the nation. Matagorda Island State Park is only a short boat ride away, and offers fishing, swimming, beach combing, hunting, camping, and birding.

Most of Matagorda Island is owned by the U.S. Department of the Interior, which has set aside a large portion of the island as a wildlife management area to protect endangered species. The island is open to the public, but has no amenities. The Aransas National Wildlife Refuge is 70,000 acres along San Antonio Bay and is home to alligators, whooping cranes, javelina, bobcats and much more.

Seadrift plays host each June to the Texas Water Safari, a grueling 260-mile canoe race from San Marcos, Texas to Seadrift. The race is non-stop and no motors or sails are allowed. It begins on the San Marcos River, and then follows the Guadalupe River all the way into San Antonio Bay, and then to Seadrift. There are many perils along the way, including 20-foot high dams, snakes and rapids, which mean many of the 200 entrants don't finish.

Port Lavaca hosts several fishing tournaments each year, and has a great city marina for boaters. It is a migratory flyway for 400 species of birds, and the area is a wintering ground for numerous species, including the endangered Whooping Crane. Port Lavaca is also home to the Formosa Wetland Walkway, a 3200 foot elevated walkway stretching over coastal wetlands and tidal exchange basins, and which has a tower and gazebo from which to observe wildlife.

Several upscale waterfront developments are taking place in the Seadrift/Port O'Connor/Port Lavaca area. These include Swan Point Landing, The Sanctuary at Costa Grande, Bay Harbour, and Bay Club at Falcon Point Ranch. Each of these developments uses the natural beauty and resources of this pristine area to attract homeowners.