

# The great escape

By: Yohana de la Torre



From the routine to the out-of-this-world spectacle, from the mundane to the breathtaking, this is what North Captiva Island has in store for you.

Call it paradise— thanks to the sugary, sandy beaches, the aroma of the salty breeze and the enchanting experience of tranquility in isolation.

North Captiva Island is located north of Captiva Island and south of Cayo Costa. This charming paradise, also known as Upper Captiva, is a four-mile long Caribbean enchantment known for its dazzling sun-kissed beaches and lush tropical vegetation. Since it is truly a private oasis, most visitors arrive by prearranged water taxi, private boat or plane.

“North Captiva is a vacation destination, with true privacy,”

says Resort Properties Internationale Realtor, Wendy Muller. “The island is a natural, serene getaway spot with pristine beaches where life takes on a less hurried and worried lifestyle, as compared to mainland type of vacations.”

This truly unique gem off the Gulf Coast of Florida has an interesting island history. For nearly 2,000 years, the Calusa Indians inhabited and dominated the isles. When the Spaniards began exploring for gold, they virtually wiped out the entire Calusa population.

Muller explained that for years, the islands became a popular haven for pirates and their ships during bad weather or heavy seas. It is even told that pirates like Jose Gaspar worked on his battered ships

and took beautiful women as captives. Hence, the island was named Captiva.

At the turn of the century, North Captiva was the site of an extensive tomato plantation. A few homes and subdivisions were plotted and constructed in the 1960’s. But today, North Captiva Island is home to a number of residents and vacationers drawn to the isle for its beauty and relaxing atmosphere.

Anyone would call this place heaven on earth. And the truth is the faultless beaches provide the perfect backdrop for that much-needed romantic getaway or that memorable family vacation snapshot.

“We have about 35 local residents,” says Muller. “But

all types of people come to enjoy North Captiva— couples, families, groups traveling, and even special celebration parties like weddings.”

Upper Captiva has 350 homes, of which one-third are available as rental properties. Muller explained that homes run the gamut from beachside bungalows to luxury beach homes.

“Most homes on the island are available for vacation rentals,” explained Muller. “Some rent at a minimum of 3 nights and other homes run on different schedules and rent at a 7-night minimum. Romantic beachfront getaway homes for two, like the Sandcastle, go for \$2,230 during the summer. Homes like the Tradewinds, which has 3 bedrooms, 2.5

baths and a private pool can run vacationers \$2,225 for a seven-night stay. And the ultra-luxurious 5 bedroom, 5 bath, Casa La De Da is about \$4,085 in the summer. All rates are subject to change according to the season and require an additional 11% tax.”

As an island resident herself, Muller explained that North Captiva has the best of both worlds— relaxation and fun. For the energetic bunch, a number of activities are available to take pleasure in, so your days beachside will be nothing but splendor.

Those looking to connect with the outdoors have found just the place because the true balance of man and nature is present in this extraordinary treasure of an island. Trigger the explorer in you and connect to the isle with nature walks. Roughly half of the island is a state preserve area that was acquired in 1975. This priceless piece of land is home to 750-acres of uninhabited wilderness that vacationers can getaway to and bask in the beauty of a marvelous environment.

Take your golf cart or bicycles and head over to the Bayside Beach, at the end of the airstrip, and marvel as you spot dolphins and manatees.

“For those who love the water, a number of external activities are available,” Muller adds. “A large number of vacationers enjoy going shelling, boating, fishing off boats and docks, kayaking, island hopping and more.”

Muller explained that her company does not provide the following services, but local boat captains or rental establishments can further your island experience and transport you to nearby places like Cabbage Key, Cayo Costa and Boca Grande.

Dinning and entertainment include several spots on the island. Barnacle Phil’s is a casual lunch or dinner spot that lets you pull up to their dock and enjoy the island’s most popular Caribbean and Island favorites including seafood chowder, jerk-style fish and chicken. The Boat House is another of North Captiva’s dining destinations. Serving steak and fresh seafood, this fine dining establishment provides vacationers with a place to dine and take pleasure in the harbor

and lagoon site. Mango’s offers informal dining with delicious soups, salads and more.

“You can also enjoy some cocktails poolside at the North Captiva Island Club or just relax, after all, you are on Island Time,” adds Muller.

So, if you’re looking to sit back and enjoy the feel of cold-sand between your toes, serenity at your finger tips and memories beyond your dreams, North Captiva is the spot for you this summer vacation.

- A special thanks to Mark and Wendy Muller. For vacation rentals, property ownership, or to bask in the retreat of a lifetime, contact Resort Properties Internationale at 239-395-2214 or visit them on the web at [www.northcaptiva.net](http://www.northcaptiva.net).