

BEACH BUZZ

March – April 2001

Volume 2, Number 2

a publication of B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation and its Chapters
view more Beach Buzz articles online by clicking here

“Keeping Our Beaches Bare”

Trends and Adventures in Nude Recreation

By Shirley Mason

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Virtually every social interest and lifestyle choice can be found in the clothing optional arena. From religious conferences with outdoor sunrise services to nude sky diving and bare-buns marathon runs, one would not have to look far to find other naturist/nudists who are part of an affinity group, or special interest group (SIG), within organized nude recreation. Nude recreation choices is the focus of this issue of the Beach Buzz. We will explore a small sampling of the opportunities along with the growth and demographic profiles of this market segment. And in doing so, we'll share statements from top naturist leaders and business owners about its current and future trends.

To my knowledge, the first national article that finally took a serious look at the growth and financial significance of this recreation travel market appeared in the October 12, 1992 issue of Forbes magazine titled “Naked Appeal.” Since that time, such prestigious publications as the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Washington Post, New York Times, Playboy, and numerous other mainstream media both nationally and internationally have covered nude recreation.

Right here in Florida, just north of Tampa, Pasco County is known as the nudist capital of the world, hosting international residents and visitors. It is home to five nudist clubs and combined is the second largest tax base for that county – second only to the posh resort community of Saddlebrook. These private clubs range from a full service upscale condominium resort community with a hotel, restaurants, a campground for motorhomes and trailers, manufactured homes, townhouses, and custom single-family homes, to smaller intimate club

facilities with mobile homes and vacation cabins for rent. All quite nice and well kept with a variety of social activities. The largest and best known of these is Paradise Lakes Nudist Resort which opened in 1981. The creation of Paradise Lakes represented not only a paradigm shift in how North Americans would vacation at nudist facilities, but it would also demonstrate the high discretionary income and education level of the majority participants in the lifestyle. The original club has had two major expansions over the years which now totals about 80 acres on a small lake that hosts more than 85,000 visitors from North America and Europe each year.

For those who are considering living the clothing optional lifestyle or dreaming of a carefree, clothes-free vacation, the cost to do so is as follows at Paradise Lakes Nudist Resort: a 440 square foot vacation condo at the resort sells for about \$77,000, new condos sells in the \$129,000 range and 2/2 townhouses go

Even Fidel Castro has seen the economic value of providing clothing optional beaches to attract international tourists to Cuba.

for approximately \$150,000. Custom single family homes go for up to \$500,000 with an average about \$385,000. Vacation visitors to Club Paradise generally stay at the hotel for \$75 per night plus a daily membership fee of \$25 per person, plus tax. From early spring to early winter is their season and occupancy rate hovers near 90% full – so advance reservations are a must.

Expanding on this upscale market, and starting about eleven years ago, U.S. and Canadian entrepreneurs began expanding the range of goods and services to the naturists bringing in about \$200 million in revenues a year. Among these are high end custom cruises and new, improved and expanded resort facilities and sundry merchandise. The number of participants is growing some 20% annually.

NUDE CRUISES

One of the most popular clothing optional activities is nude cruising. For the tenth year, Bare Necessities Tour & Travel has seen unprecedented success beginning with its very first cruise aboard the 560 plus passenger Crown Monarch. They offer up to four cruises a year by chartering major cruise ships from various companies such as industry leader Carnival Cruise Lines. The traditional midwinter nude cruise in 2001 is aboard Carnival's Jubilee with a passenger capacity of 1,486. Depending on cabin location (class), guests pay from \$100 to \$238 per day (without air and port taxes) for a 9-day cruise. For the one week luxury cruise, a premium of \$268 to \$707 per person each day. Demand has steadily grown with most charters selling out 6-9 months in advance of cruise date and profits are significant.

Bare Necessities founder and president, Nancy Tieman reminisces about the well-meaning cautionary advice from long time nude recreation business owners not to take the gamble she and husband Tom took when they decided to venture in this uncharted enterprise of leasing a cruise ship and filling it with nudists. Now she says with genuine sincerity, “I can't imagine doing anything else . . . it was the best decision we ever made.”

Boaters have long enjoyed shedding their clothes and letting the warmth of the sun, cool of the wind and taste of the surf,



kiss their bare skin. If your tastes run to smaller, more intimate settings, your choices are vast. Now you can hire full crews and charter small boats to large yachts that specifically promote nude charters.

Windjammer Cruises has also been successfully selling nude cruises since the early 1980's and Carnival Cruise Lines has had top-free decks on some of its ships since the late 1980s.

NATURIST RESORTS

If clothing optional resorts with tropical beaches are your turn-on, then there are several facilities throughout the Caribbean and Central America to explore. Club Orient is the best known of the Caribbean nude resorts and nearly all of the Super Clubs have clothing optional areas. They readily admit that attracting the naturist market has been pivotal to their resounding success.

Jim Bailey, owner of Castaways Travel out of Houston Texas, is one of the largest travel agencies specializing in nude recreation vacations. He states, "We book groups of naturists year after year [at Super Clubs], leasing the entire facility a week or two at a time so our clients can have a total nude experience." And for his response to future trends and opportunities for nude recreation, he enthusiastically states, "Explosive...it's more prevalent and more popular than ever."

Even Fidel Castro has seen the economic value of providing clothing optional beaches to attract international tourists to Cuba. We first learned of this from our Canadian naturist friends in the early 1990's and later read about it in travel publications and newspaper travel sections after checking with an expert on Cuba's economy.

CAP D'AGDE

For naturists worldwide there is one facility that is considered our "Mecca." It is a nude city in southern France called Cap D'Agde that began in 1956 as a small naturist campground. The government recognized its popularity and contribution to the financial stability of the economy. So, the government invested to help make Cap D'Agde what it is today. The city is made up of four distinct complexes which

accommodates thousands of people and a wealth of business enterprises. Only here can you do all your normal daily activities in the nude, which includes shopping, banking, doctor visits, post office, car repair, etc. – all in the nude! The freedom is a tremendously heady experience and is a must see for every naturist, at least once in a lifetime.

BED & BREAKFASTS

If more intimate accommodations are your preference, where you can meet and develop friendships with a small group of nude-friendly people, the choice of naturist bed & breakfasts are plentiful and growing. Generally off the beaten path and not necessarily zoned for such, these private homes offer a broad range of

Right here in Florida, just north of Tampa, Pasco County is known as the nudist capital of the world.

amenities, but always private and friendly. Two of the areas best known for these charming clothing optional hideaways and where they are openly publicized by visitors bureaus are located in Palm Springs and Key West.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS & EVENTS

Then, there are dozens of SIGs and hundreds of non-landed social clubs of naturists that can be found in counties and cities worldwide. If snorkeling and scuba diving is your interest, there is the group called Buff Divers. If you are a devout Christian, check out the Fig Leaf Forum or Christian Nudists groups. For nearly every social, artistic, scientific, religious, and recreation interest, there are people who enjoy it more sans clothing – even in Alaska.

Annual special events, parades, and celebrations with nudity as an accepted theme can be seen throughout North America. The Bay-to-Breakers in San Francisco (nicknamed BARE-to-Breakers), the Burning Man Festival held in southwestern states in the desert, Fantasy Fest in Key West, and the

Columbus Day Sailing Regatta in Miami's Biscayne Bay are just a few of the larger ones bringing in enormous revenues to the local economy. The birth of each of these events are rather recent and participants number in the thousands and growing each year. So getting a healthy 'nude fix' is easier than ever before.

Considered the bible of nude recreation "Lee Baxandall's World Guide to Nude Beaches and Resorts" provides the information one would ever need to begin one's education and exploration of places to go to enjoy nude recreation. This is the book. 272 pages of locations, descriptions, contact numbers, web sites and e-mail addresses, and some of the best natural photography you've ever seen. I guarantee it will bring a smile of innocence and appreciation to your face. Price: \$28 plus \$3.50 shipping. Guide can be purchased at the Beach Mall, www.sffb.com/beachmall -OR- www.floridanaturist.org -OR- Order by phone: 305-893-8838. Major credit cards accepted.

FUTURE TRENDS

- Keep a lookout for . . .
- South Florida's first naturist beach resort hotel
- Nude time share cruise ships
- New designated/government sanctioned clothing optional beach sites
- Expanded and improved amenities at clothing optional beach sites
- Naturist vacation discount travel club
- International joint venture investments for nude recreation projects ✨