

# FAMILY GETAWAY GUIDE

*Captiva Island, Florida*

## Tropical Meets Genteel at South Seas

Our plane didn't get in until after 10 p.m. That meant 7 o'clock Pacific Time. But after frantic packing and a trip made longer by flight delays, it felt like midnight. As we snaked along the two-lane road from Fort Myers on Florida's west coast, I vaguely glimpsed shadows of lush foliage. Forty-five minutes later, the road ended at South Seas Plantation Resort & Yacht Harbour, the final outpost reachable by car from

Located on Captiva Island and surrounded by the blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the one time key lime plantation is now 330 acres of laid-back luxury. After lazing on the uncrowded white sand beach—the resort has two-and-a-half miles of it—we rode bicycles down the croaking frog-lined road to do some non-serious shopping (who can leave Florida without a carved coconut head?). Once rested, we had plenty of activities to choose from: The nautically-inclined can sail, windsurf, snorkel, scuba dive, ride a wave runner (like a motorcycle on water), canoe and go on a sunset boat cruise. Landlubbers can partake of golf, tennis, shelling and nature walks. Other facilities include four restaurants, a fitness center and 18 swimming pools.

Just like home, the kids keep their own schedule (but at least you don't have to chauffeur). Pelican Pals Camp, for 3 to 5 year olds, runs for two-and-a-half morning hours of puppet shows, crafts and shelling; 6 to 8 year olds hit the beach at Captiva Kids Camp playing water games, building sandcastles and racing hermit crabs. Those 9 to 12 can join the Castaway Club for an all-day program including canoeing, bike rides and wildlife refuge tours. There's also a day-long nature exploration camp for children 6 to 12 to learn about the island's varied plants, shells and wildlife—like dolphins, manatees and alligators. Camp is open summer and vacations, day sessions run about \$14. Teens can join luau pool parties, take group windsurfing and other lessons or just compare tans. Kids' Dinner Theatre (\$12) provides pizza and a movie for your 3 to 12 year old while you two can enjoy a more gourmet meal together (the King's Crown was especially elegant and romantic).

Accommodations—from hotel rooms to three-bedroom cottages—start at \$145 per night, summer rates. Call South Seas Plantation at (800) 237-3102.

—Vivien Santana Hughes



the mainland. The rushing, ocean current furnished a soothing background to our marina-view, two-bedroom-and-kitchen suite and, thankfully, sleep ensued swiftly for all.

