



By Ray Collins

# Manasota Beach Club

## MANASOTA BEACH CLUB



### Your Table is Ready...

#### Quaint. Peaceful. Old Florida.

... Just some of the words you may use when you discover the best kept secret in the local tennis world.

#### Impersonal. Trendy. Crass.

... Just some of the words never used to describe the Manasota Beach Club.

The lack of pretentiousness of the little sign out front sets the tone for one of the most unassuming, yet interesting resorts you'll ever visit on the Gulf Coast of Florida.



Entering the Manasota Beach Club is like entering a time warp. I felt like I was being transported back in time to a kinder gentler era.

We arrived on a Saturday afternoon in time to see tennis pro, Kevin Hunt, hosting an exhibition with three other top-notch players. Dozens of guests and club members watched and applauded, and then afterwards mingled with the players while sipping wine and munching on hors d'oeuvres.

An hour later, the same group trickled into the dining room, men in jackets and ties, women in dresses.

"Hello Mr. Collins, your table is right here," the maitre d' said, each time I arrived for meals throughout the weekend.

There are fourteen cottages accommodating up to fifty guests on the twenty five-acre resort located on both sides of Manasota Key Road. Our cottage looked out over the Gulf of Mexico. Hearing the waves lapping on the shore is the kind of serene sound people buy in stores to help them fall asleep.

Kevin arranged a doubles group for me in the morning. We wore tennis whites; other guests of the resort watched on the sidelines after brunch.

One good reinforcement tip I got from Kevin for playing doubles is that I need to serve the ball and get up to the net. I had gotten lazy over the months, trying to rely on my ground strokes to win the point. He gently encouraged me to serve and volley.

Kevin has the kind of people skills that would make Dale Carnegie proud. He makes everyone feel special by mentioning one's name in every other sentence, and he never forgets customer service.

Speaking of customer service, I signed up for a massage

and when I asked where I needed to go, I was told, "Nowhere, you can get a massage in your cottage." Decadent.

There are bigger and more modern day clubs on the Gulf Coast of Florida, but none as old-school and special as the Manasota Beach Club. There's no other place like it.

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[www.manasotabeachclub.com](http://www.manasotabeachclub.com)



Ray Collins is a former TV newscaster and country club tennis pro. He now owns a Sarasota-based media company. Details at [www.RayCollinsMedia.com](http://www.RayCollinsMedia.com).

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