

HALF-HOUR DRIVE, *Yet A World Away!*



IT'S A PRIVATE HIDE-AWAY with very little markings from the street. In the southwest corner of Sarasota County smack dab on the Gulf of Mexico, is a charming 'Old Florida' retreat. It's a place to leave the rest of the world behind. A club that lets guests decompress and recharge their batteries.

The Manasota Beach Club began in 1960 by Robert and Sydney Buffum. Their daughter, Sydney, now runs the resort.

For nearby residents, MBC is a private club where they come for the view, recreation or meals. But for others, like us--it's a place to come vacation.

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

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lapping on the shore is the kind of serene sound people buy in stores to help them fall asleep.

After we unpacked, we walked to the tennis court in the center of the property. Kevin Hunt has been on the tennis pro here for years. He organizes clinics and exhibitions on a regular basis. He and his lovely wife, Julie, live right next to the court.

Later in the day, we walked along the beach during sunset before changing for dinner.

Walking in the dining room is

the closest I've ever felt to being royalty. "Hello Mr. Collins, let me show you to your table." There were name tags on our table and a waitress or waiter ready to help.

Fine dining is offered from November to April. There are a number of choices for each meal. (I have a gluten allergy, and the chef was prepared to work around that.)

There's something to be said about a place where no money is exchanged on the spot. You simply get up from the table, walk out the door and meander back to your cottage while listening to the gulf waves lapping on the shore. Your own private club! An absolute break from the world.

When the weekend ended and we packed our bags in the car and pulled back into civilization. We left with nice memories of a peaceful weekend in this little slice of paradise. – Ray Collins

