

Discovering Grand Dunes Marina

Like Spanish explorer Lucas Vásques de Ayllón who founded the first settlement in South Carolina in 1526, members of the Southport Sailing and Boating Club cruised south on the ICW on Friday, May 12, in hopes of discovering new S.C. cruising ports. And like explorers before them, some suffered unexpected hardships—mechanical in nature. Undaunted, four of the five exploratory vessels---Blue Waters, Joy Ride II, My Pleasure, and the unnamed 27' Pursuit -- pressed on. The advanced party—missing Felicitas---came upon a potential anchorage after 2.5 hours—a port never before visited by SSBC but foretold by SSBC members Kathy and Bob Johnson after perusing many an ancient maritime chart.

Natives call the port The Grand Dunes Marina of North Myrtle Beach. And it was indeed grand—offering a bounty of berths, local food and beverage inns, which most graciously welcomed our SSBC travelers. Felicitas, having overcome mechanical hardships, joined the expedition at 5:32; just time for the dock Grog and Foodfest hosted by Craig and Deb Thompson and Jeanne and Sid Rampy, assisted by Millie Krol, Susan, Murdock, and Julie Lawler who brought additional vittles; enjoyed by all. (Needless to say Captains Mike, Gary, and Nick enjoyed the fruits of their mates labor.)

Our hearty explorers continued their gastronomic celebration at the local "Anchor Bar" where once again grog and fare were shared in abundance. And then back to the vessel Joy Ride II for more liquid camaraderie and conversation.

But it was the following morning, ay Saturday, when the true meaning of gastronomic discovery was witnessed, as once again our mariners gathered at Blue Waters for morning nourishment. Captains Sid and Craig helmed skillets cooking eggs, pancakes, sausages, and bacon, while in the galley, First Mates Deb and Jeanne prepared fruits, banana bread, and more. And who can forget those "manmosas" with orange juice and Triple Sec.

Then it was off to the local watering hole—the swimming kind—at the nearby Anchor Inn for an afternoon of soaking and/or sleeping in the warming sun. (Be forewarned however, future mariners should bring their own water to this watering hole, as native water sellers wanted \$9.00 for two bottles of water. Two cans of beer were only \$14.00, a better deal!)

Saturday night brought more merrymaking at the local Italian Restaurant— Ducatis-- where meals were truly served in abundance. (Horsepower is needed to make the short overland trip to Ducatis. Foot travel is not advised, less our mariners be attacked while crossing road number 17.)

With bellies filled, and a new port discovered, our mariners departed Grand Dunes early Sunday morning for the return trip to St James Marina, ever thankful for the advanced work of Kathy and Bob Johnson who made the exploratory trip and discovery of The Grand Dunes Marina possible. No doubt, Grand Dunes will see the SSBC marinas again!!!

Faithfully recorded by your scribe:
Nick Lawler

















