



Perfectly Private

Just 50 miles east of Florida basking in the warm Gulfstream waters lies a tiny, unspoiled island with a rich and colorful history. Cat Cay is part of the Bimini-Bahama chain of islands and was once a pirate stronghold for the likes of Blackbeard and Henry Morgan. The island was

used during the American Revolution by Loyalists passing through on their way to other British territories, and then during the American Civil War by Confederate soldiers. Years later, it served as a haven for World War II PT-boats searching for German U-Boats along the southern U.S. coast. In early February, however, it was bikini-clad models who roamed the beaches rather than buccaneers or soldiers.

Cat Cay's beauty and tranquility initially enticed *Southern Boating* to choose the location for its Annual Swimsuit Issue's photo shoot. But soon after arrival, the production crew of 12 also discovered easy access to a world-class beach, a full-service marina with a transient cruiser program, a 1,995-foot airstrip adjacent to the marina, great food, interesting culture and history, privacy and security, and ease of clearing customs—Cat Cay is a Bahamian port of entry with a customs office located at the 108-slip marina. The approach by sea is through the cut at the south end of Gun Cay—managed by the Cat Cay Yacht Club—and past the historic Gun Cay lighthouse, which has been restored by the effort and financial support of the 152 Cat Cay members, a testament to their commitment to the preservation and appreciation of the environment and the



Ashley, Sarah and Stevie are all smiles as they pose in front of the boutique open to the public in cute and colorful tanks that commemorate their exclusive swimwear shoot in Cat Cay.

STORY & PHOTOS BY JIM RAYCROFT



Clockwise from top left: Norman serves refreshments to the crew during a mid-day break from the photo shoot; smiling swimsuit models arrive at Cat Cay courtesy of Fort Lauderdale-based Sky Limo; Cat Cay welcomes non-members at its marina, restaurant and bar, where models and crew enjoy a freshly caught lunch on the water.

greater Bahamian community.

Louis Wasey purchased Cat Cay in 1931 for \$400,000 with a dream to turn the private island into the Cat Cay Yacht Club. Many of that era's rich and famous found the island intriguing and some became members, while others simply visited year after year, including Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon as guests of club members. The term "private island" may seem a bit stuffy and restrictive, but Cat Cay is anything but; its warm and welcoming nature is courtesy of General Manager John McCranie and his professional staff.

Dockmasters Shep and Radar accommodate yachts up to 160 feet in the marina with fuel, shore power and Wi-Fi. Transportation on the island is by foot or electric golf cart as there are no cars or motorcycles, which helps maintain the peaceful, quiet atmosphere that sets Cat Cay apart from other Bahamian destinations.

Privately owned pool villas, beachfront homes and cottages are available for rent to members and sponsored guests. Victoria House—built in the 1930s by K. B. C. Smith, aka "Smike"—is a charming six-bedroom inn sitting on the shoreline of beautiful Turtle Beach and provided

comfortable accommodations for our crew, a sunset view and sea breeze, and the perfect end to busy days of scouting and shooting. Though privacy is maintained throughout much of the island, members and non-members alike are welcome at the marina, Nauticat Restaurant and Lounge, The Dockside Bar, market, Cat Cay Boutique, and medical clinic.

Cat Cay offers abundant natural beauty in an environment where doors are rarely locked and children can explore the island freely, a one-of-a-kind Bahamian experience that contrasts sharply with Bimini's casino and nightlife 10 miles to the north. "Exclusive and inclusive" Cat Cay offers the ultimate luxury that only a private island provides—whether you venture there for world-class sport fishing, bone fishing, diving, filming in a tropical location, or just to relax and, perhaps, forge new friendships. I, for one, am looking forward to my next visit and shaking hands with Norman, the best waiter and bartender in The Bahamas.

INFORMATION

catcayyachtclub.com

Call (242) 347-3565 for dock reservations. 