



Sunmier Palms – Treasure of the Treasure Coast...

*an UNEdited article published in "N Magazine " (TNS) by author Tom Pine,
a resident member of Sunmier Palms Nudist Park.*

Among the reasons for starting a nudist park, probably the last one on the list, would be because someone was homeless. Yet, that's exactly what happened with Sunmier Palms.

I sat down and spoke with T. A. Wyner, yes, *that* T. A. Wyner, the daring lady who walked around wearing nothing but the Constitution to demonstrate for body freedom rights. A veritable encyclopedia of naturist factoids, T. A. related how Sunmier Palms came to be.

"We have to start from whence we came.... In 1948, Reed Supplee and wife purchased a beautiful, 40-acre native pine forest, at the very end of the Florida peninsula, in what's called Florida City. And that was one of the first, in Florida, I guess, nudist parks, called Sunny Palms. Jim Hadley (who later went on to build Cypress cove) was a member at Sunny Palms.... While he was at Sunny, he developed a great nudist PR. European nudists came over and there was a PR symposium...promoting the good image of nudists.

"Then one day came and the park was sold, without the members knowing, by the individual owner.... A zoning change was necessary for DuPont to take over the property." The members of Sunny Palms, as well as their neighbors, fought the move, but it was DuPont, after all, and they rushed the zoning change through. When I asked if DuPont still owned the land, T. A.'s answer was telling. "No. Karma...and hurricanes. We told them, 'You won't be able to use the property for what you think....' They wanted to use [the property] as a paint testing lab. We told them, 'You're going to put paint slabs there, and you're going to get pine sap all over [them].' They ultimately lost it, couldn't use it, no one would work there in summer....

"Later on, after they abandoned it...the last time we checked, it had gone into the hands of conservation[ists], and the land that was once Sunny is now conservation land, owned by Miami-Dade." The irony of this story is that, when Sunny Palms used the land, only 5 acres of the entire 40 were developed. The other 35 remained untouched pine forest.

T. A. then related how Sunmier Palms happened. "We all lost our homes...at the time there were 50 families that lived there.... This happened in the middle of the summer. Where are we going for next winter? Somehow a pool of people came together and said, 'What we ought to do is just go find new land in Dade County, this [agricultural] area.'" At the time, T. A. and her partner Barry were members of White Thorn Lodge (in western Pennsylvania), which was a not-for-profit, co-op, so the group decided to start a park based on Florida on that model.

"Unfortunately, we did not find land in Dade County. We broadened our scope to be...on the West Coast from Ft. Myers south, and on the East Coast anywhere [from] Vero Beach south, for good reason—it is the weather line in Florida.... We never thought that we would come this far north, but that was the line that the biologists gave us to grow what we wanted, because we thought we'd have to grow things as an income as a non-profit...we didn't know that we'd make it just on the RV rentals.

"The decision that we made was not to start from raw land and build everything. It was Barry's idea to look for an existing RV park that somebody wanted to sell...and that's how this came together." The small group originally went to look at the RV park, but ended up wanting a nearby store (for selling their produce), a residence, and a section of swamp, which they later reclaimed for the agricultural area (and for camping), and then they wanted a 12-acre section of forest to make their nature preserve. "Eight families loaned the non-profit

[money], and that was enough to put money down, and get a very specific loan from the former owner, and have some money to do some renovation work....”

There are more chapters in the story of Sunnier Palms’ genesis but, suffice it to say, the deal went through, they established the non-profit co-op, and found a new place to live.

Today, Sunnier Palms is a quiet little park, co-operatively owned, with about 10 acres of developed trailer and RV sites (53 in all). Members permanently occupy some of them, members with movable RVs occupy others, and Sunnier makes the rest available to short-term visitors. All sites (except for tent camping) are full-hookup (with water, electric, and sewer). A few acres of park-like area, with citrus trees, are available for camping.

A nature preserve and wildlife sanctuary occupies 12 of Sunnier’s 23+ acres. Walking through it, you can imagine you are a Seminole Indian, moving through the land as it was centuries ago. Since you’ll most likely be nude, it enhances the illusion greatly, as you listen to the wind sighing through the slash pines, and see and hear birds as they fly through. In the center is a beautiful, natural pond, with its reeds, cattails and water lilies. They’ve conveniently situated benches throughout the preserve, including two at the pond’s edge, so you can sit and enjoy nature’s beauty in a peaceful setting. Be sure to bring your towel.

Sunnier also offers a unique feature to Florida nudist parks—an organic garden, where members plant and harvest a bounty of organic produce. At many of the park’s potlucks, you may be enjoying this organic produce in one of the salads. Imagine...farming and harvesting vegetables in January, February, and early March!

Facilities include a clubhouse, swimming pool, hot tub, pétanque, and shuffleboard court. Attached to the clubhouse is a laundry area that works on the honor system, and a nudist-style bathhouse. What do I mean by nudist-style? When you stand before the two entrances, one says MEN (and Couples) and the other says, WOMEN (and Couples). Now, *that’s* nudist style!

Because it’s a co-op, members do their share to keep Sunnier going. Many have specific jobs—garbage removal, fix-it work, bathhouse cleanup, grounds keeping, and manning the front desk in the office. This results in a well-kept, well-run nudist park environment that is cozy and pleasing to the eye. Regular meetings (on Monday nights) help to keep the park running smoothly.

Sunnier also has an activities volunteer, who plans sports events, dances, parties, barbecues, lunches, and suppers. There’s usually a Sunday night “pot-luck,” informally organized by members. Every so often Sunnier hosts “thank you” lunches and suppers to thank members for their help. Sunnier also provides a kitchen and outside barbecue grill at the clubhouse for members and guests to use. They also have Direct (satellite) TV, and free Wi-Fi broadcast throughout the park.

Needless to say, winters will find Sunnier Palms hopping and hard-pressed to provide camping and RV space for visitors. Folks generally book early, and leave a deposit, so as to be sure they have a spot available to them over the winter months.

Sunnier Palms sits between Vero and Jensen Beaches. Fort Pierce, Port St. Lucie and Stuart are nearby communities. Conveniently located just off Interstate 95, near Florida’s Turnpike on Rt. 70, there are numerous restaurants and motels, and shopping centers and malls (in Vero and Jensen Beaches). The UDT-Seal Museum, a Jai-Alai fronton, beaches, boat ramps, and marinas are also a stone’s-throw away. Downtown Ft. Pierce hosts events, such as the Art Walk, Friday Fest, Marina Magic Festival, a Farmer’s Market and much more. Theater and indie movie performances occur in Ft. Pierce’s historic Sunrise Theatre, a beautifully restored Art Deco theater from yesteryear.

“But what about the agricultural aspect of the original group’s idea?” I can hear you ask. As T. A. describes it, “The secondary income was intended to be those trees that are lining the front of the road, which are African date palms that developers look for [as] mature ones and pay a nice price for each head. And then the other was

fruit trees....” People use African date palms as a “living fence,” because they have horrible thorns along each frond that, once embedded, require surgical removal to avoid tearing the flesh when extracted. Their dates aren’t very palatable, however, not that you’d want to risk picking them. Lining the front of Sunnier Palms, they provide a screen *and* a nearly impenetrable barrier to trespass. Sunnier currently has 80, which are going for about \$2000 apiece! Landscapers have special equipment with which to remove them.

T. A. continues. “Another thing is the litchis, which are exotic, Chinese fruit, and fruit in the summer, which is really a good thing.” (They could sell the fruit when income is low.) “By the way, we thought we would pick the fruit and sell it, but people eat them. But we haven’t had to do that (sell the fruit for income).”

A visit to Sunnier Palms will afford any naturist the experience they crave, at a place with all the amenities, as well as a regard for nature and the environment second to none. This was the intent of Sunnier’s first founders and remains a factor here in the 21st Century. Come to Sunnier and enjoy naturism at its best. You may find yourself reserving a spot for the winter!



About The Author:

Tom Pine is a resident member of Sunnier Palms Nudist Park and is now a full-time writer. He and his wife Marilyn, discovered naturism at Gunnison Beach, Sandy Hook, NJ in 1998, while pursuing Tom’s avocation as an amateur photographer, photographing nudes. He has published articles in *N Magazine*, for the Naturist Society (TNS) and for *Going Natural*, the publication of the Federation of Canadian Naturists (FCN) of which he is a member. He also published articles in *Naturally Magazine*, the now defunct publication of Internaturally, Inc., based in New Jersey.

After living “on the road” for six years in a Class A motor coach, he and Marilyn chose Sunnier Palms as their permanent home in 2012, considering it their “little corner of Paradise.” Tom, among other things, currently pursues his writing career and has 5 books now in print, with more to come. You can see more of his work at his writing website: www.wordworkershop.com. Tom also publishes a “nudesletter” for a traveling club he and Marilyn founded in 2000, The Naked Truth Naturists (TNTN). You can visit that website at: www.thenakedtruthnaturists.com and request his free, monthly nudesletter by sending him an e-mail at: wordworker@earthlink.net.

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