

## RAMBLINGS - PARADISE REVISITED?

Florida has always been a haven for retirees especially from the cold northern states. Lisa's brother, and cousin-in-law, all doctors, together with a group of their doctor-friends totaling over a dozen, made that move starting a decade ago. They chose a new development called Palm Coast, near Daytona Beach, which was literally a new city built from scratch. The unique thing was that most of the houses were accessible both by road and by water.



Above left photo shows the Atlantic Ocean on the top right in blue, with a fabulous beach. Running down in the center of the photo is the "Intercoastal", a natural waterway that separates what really is an island with the rest of the marshy land. Most of the eastern coast of the US is that way, from New Jersey to the Carolinas, down to Florida: islands abutting the Atlantic, thus giving protection to the mainland, which especially in Florida is a marshy and wet. So in this Palm Coast location, the marshy area was dredged, and sculptured to what is shown in a closer Google view on photo on right: fingers of roadway and waterway interlaced to access all the properties. Not all owners have boats; those that do have boat slips which lift the boats out of the water, as can be clearly seen on waterways in the photo. The water in the canals are therefore salty sea water; there is no flow such as from a river or lake, save for the natural tidal flow which raises or lowers the sea level 2 feet or so over the mean depth of 6 feet. When the development was new, the water was clear enough to see the bottom, but now, with run-off from the surface, it is murky. There is abundant wildlife in the water. Aside from fish and crabs, there are manatees, and occasional dolphins, especially nearer the intercoastal, and of course, some rare alligators.

We first visited them two years ago, and I was pleasantly surprised to meet one of my second cousins from the Ilocos; he and his wife also were retired doctors and part of this group. We were feted for lunch at Lisa's brother's place, and they had to specify if they were coming over by boat or by car. Last month, we visited their paradise again.



From the airplane. Meandering rivers and marshland.



Flagler Beach near Palm Coast with fishing pier in background.



Swimming at the house pool of Lisa's brother. Most houses have pools that are encased in screening against bugs.



Visiting my cousin's place via boat. Note my cousin's boat on slip.



Lisa's cousin gunning his boat at the Intercoastal. That's 150 horses pushing.



Going around by car.

Yet, all of these retired doctors do concede that eventually, they will have to move on, as the genteel trappings of their boats and golf courses will not anymore hold their allure due to physical limitations. Some say they may go back to the Philippines; others will move in with their children, or to retirement homes. As for us, we like to paraphrase another town-mate, who like us, took early retirement in Tanjay. He says, isn't this just a simple paradise?