

SNOOKS
BAYSIDE
More than a restaurant...

Great Food • Cool Cocktails • Spectacular Sunsets • Nightly Music • Cruisin' Tikis

Full Menu Take Out Available

305-453-5004 • www.snooks.com • Key Largo MM 99.8 Southbound Lane at Traffic Light • Behind the New Sandal Factory Outlet

Happy Easter!
STOP BY! WE NOW SELL FLORIDA LOTTERY!

Key Largo
Flowers & Gifts

305-451-3702 • 99551 Overseas Highway • KeyLargoFlorist.com
FACE MASK REQUIRED • NO-CONTACT DELIVERY • MON-THURS 9-4 • FRI-9-5 • SAT 10-1

It's Kitten Season!
Fix Those Felines!

Please help "fix" pet overpopulation by spaying and neutering your pets.

Free spay and neuter clinics at Key Largo Animal Shelter, normally every 2 weeks.

This program is privately funded by Humane Animal Care Coalition for Upper Keys residents.

Please call the shelter for details and appointments.

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm and Saturday 9am to 5pm

Mile marker 106 Oceanside • phone 305-451-0088

SHIPWRECKS
OPEN 11:00 AM to 9:30 PM EVERY DAY
Key Largo's HIDDEN TREASURE!

DAILY FOOD & DRINK SPECIALS
Sunday - Live Music 2-6 pm

WELCOME BACK
\$1 Drafts All Day

SATURDAY - PRIME RIB DINNER

HAPPY HOUR: 4-6 pm EVERY DAY
▶▶▶ \$1 Drafts ◀◀◀

LOCALS' FAVORITE 305-453-3153 45 Garden Cove Drive MM 106

spending money

BEFORE COVID

AFTER COVID

Coconut Telegraph Spotlight on
Captain John Ciulla: From the Docks to the Stage...

MUSICIAN & CAPTAIN OF THE MONTH by Marilee Free

Celebrating his seventh year in the fabulous Florida Keys, Captain John Ciulla is truly living the dream. By day, he takes to the high seas either scuba diving or free diving our fabulous reefs, spearfishing giant groupers and other monster fish. On Monday, you can catch him doing snorkel and dive trips exploring Molasses and other Pennekamp area reefs. He operates out of Pirate's Cove Watersports at the Marriott MM103. In 2019 I did an article spotlighting Captain Dave, owner of Pirate's Cove Watersports, where I first met John. John left an impression of being a fun-loving spirit.

Fate brought John around the world and landed him in the Florida Keys. He says he came here with nothing but the clothes on his back, his skills and determination. The sleeve of tattoos John wears on his right arm tells the story of his life with vivid artistry. Overcoming life's hardships with the burning desire to succeed and learning lessons from failed attempts. He might make it look easy, but it really IS a long way to the top if you wanna rock n' roll!

As a snorkel and charter dive boat captain, John's first job in the Keys was at Robbie's



(so busy there they should have their own zip code!). Hurricane Irma washed that dream job away, but not his spirit. It was the rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of a hurricane, when he realized the Conch Republic is a tough community that bounces back by coming together in times of crisis. That Conchs are a common unity of people who help each other after disasters, hosting fund raisers for locals and practically doing anything to help our fellow human here. (That IS why you can't drown a conch!) It was the spirit of the Conch Republic that inspired him to buy a house in Harry Harris Park. Not the fish, live music, bar scene, sand bar, the weather, not even the coral reefs; it was the sense of community that he felt. #KeysStrong.

Before he moved to the Keys, he was a guitar player touring the US with his band "One." They had four number 1 hits and warmed up for Sevendust and other heavy metal bands. Born in Poughkeepsie, New York, when he was 5 his family moved to France. Then back to the states, where he attended school in Boca Raton, Florida, Minnesota, and Con-

necticut. After graduation he went to college in Palm Beach, Florida and grew to love spearfishing and scuba diving on the Atlantic. He has now had his captain's license for 12 years. In tournament fishing, he landed a record setting Warsaw grouper.

The first time I saw John perform, I recognized him from Pirate's Cove Watersports. He played a set list that rocked, no country, no Jimmy Buffett; he was performing rock n' roll, kudos John! He is a "self-taught, by ear musician" with an amazing sound, no background tracks, or vocal enhancements, that's not his style. This rock soldier is accompanied by an acoustic guitar, a couple of foot pedals and an outstanding voice. He started honing his singing skills about 4 years ago. He says he got tired of the "lead singer ego." (You know... How many lead singers does it take to screw in a lightbulb? Only one, because the world revolves around them!)

When my friend, Badge from Los Angeles, and I did our "Covid Covert Cross Country Road Trip," amid the pandemic September 2020, we caught John playing at Hog Heaven. His music made that rainy night in Islamorada even more memorable. (You can read about our road trip in the November issue of the Coconut Telegraph's online paper at www.theconchtelegraph.com.)

Covid rocked his family, around Thanksgiving 2020, one of his 3 older brothers and his mom (86) got it. His mom got sick but recovered and his brother had to be hospitalized. His dad (90), 2 brothers and he didn't get Covid at all. His parents, who now live in Stuart, are still together after 67



years of marriage... kudos again! He has one brother living in Florida, one in North Carolina and one in Idaho.

John has had an amazing journey on his way to his home in the Keys. He seems blessed with a patient, kind, familiar quality. He has performed live from the Sunset Strip in Hollywood, CA to the Cruzan Amphitheater in West Palm Beach. He toured with "One" around this great nation for 3 years, living life on the road doing over 50 concerts a year, he lived the rock n' roll dream. (He's even driven through Hell - Hell, Michigan.)

Two words come to mind after getting to know John, authentic and adventurous. He is a dedicated, hard worker driven by his goals and ideas with a charisma that gets him noticed. Someone who truly is living out his dreams.

Check him out at one of his weekly venues: Hog Heaven MM85 - Sat. 7-10:30 pm, Chef Rolf's Tuna's MM80 Thurs. 6-10pm (formerly Ooo-tray) Friday he alternates between the Florida Boy (sports bar in Lime Tree Bay) MM68 Layton and Shuck n' Dive MM83.

He is also available for parties, special events, charity events and weddings. Check out his FaceBook page or call 786-407-0320 for availability and rates.

