

Respecting The Fish

Written by Mark Shaffer

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The Backyard Tourist Hooks Up With Cast Away Charters

Story and Photos by Mark Shaffer

“There it is!” shouts Captain Tim. After 30 minutes of



fishing I’m pretty sure he can sense the fish before it hits the bait. That’s been the trend, anyway. Before the words are out of his mouth the tip of Susan’s fishing rod snaps down.

“Fish on!”

The early November morning is cool and the air is sweet with the scent of marsh grass and oysters waiting for the incoming tide. A soft breeze barely ripples the surface leaving a near perfect mirror to reflect the lipstick smear of sunrise. We’ve been fishing the mouth of a tidal creek in Port Royal Sound since just before sun up and the Speckled Trout are running.

THE CAST AWAYS

“I love my office.”

Captain Tim Deckard of Cast Away Charters sips coffee and shares a quiet moment at the console of his 24-foot Shallow Sport. Up front his partner and protégé, Captain Joe Marshall, keeps a close eye on Susan, offering tips on technique as she works the fish to the boat.

Back in the day Tim was literally on his way to becoming a chef when the pull of the



sea proved too much. “I was going to New York with a friend,” he says. In the end he couldn’t see trading in the open water for a hot kitchen and a lot of pressure. He and his wife Mare (known to some as Mrs. Capt. Tim) have run the charter business for over a decade. Captain Joe’s recently come aboard to expand the operation. The three became close while the former Drill Instructor was a neighbor stationed at Parris Island. When Joe decided to retire from the Marine Corps after nearly 20 years and five combat tours, the pieces simply fell into place.

“I just wanted to go fishing,” says Joe. “Look around. It doesn’t get any better than this and I couldn’t be luckier to do what I do, thanks to Mare and Tim.”

He watches as Tim takes a turn working with Susan on her casting.

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“Watch him. He’s the master,” Joe laughs. “He’s like Yoda, man.”



The two have been in constant orbit around her all morning conducting a master class in specialized inshore fishing. My wife – a keen student and quick study – is already a better angler under their careful tutelage.

“When we started this we knew we wanted to make it a personal experience,” says Mare Deckard. Mare takes care of the land-based aspects of the business. When you book a trip with Cast Away chances are you’ll talk to Mare and get a Christmas card when the holidays roll around, as well. We’re sitting on the Deckard’s lamp-lit, storybook porch enjoying the last of a nice chardonnay following a meal of the day’s catch prepared by Capt. Tim. This is where the chef’s training pays off as part of Cast Away’s Ultimate Fishing Experience – a morning on the water with the Captains followed by an evening under the stars dining on your catch.

The Cast Away philosophy is all about building relationships and encouraging clients to come back again and again and again. “We want to talk to people and find out why they’re in town, how many kids they have and what we can do to make their trip special and unique,” she says.

Cast Away offers an angling experience for just about anyone who ever thought

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Figure 1. A man in a light-colored jacket and a dark cap is leaning over the side of a boat, carefully holding a large fish in the water. He is using a pair of pliers to handle the fish, likely to remove a hook or tag. The fish is partially submerged, and the man's focus is on the task.



Figure 2. Three people are standing on a boat, smiling and holding large fish. On the left, a man in a light-colored jacket and a dark cap holds a large fish. In the center, a woman in a black jacket and a white cap holds a large fish. On the right, a man in a light-colored jacket and a dark cap holds a large fish. They are all smiling and looking at the camera. The background shows a body of water and a distant shoreline.

