



### **A Short History of the Sebastian Beach Inn**

The Sebastian Beach Inn is housed in Brevard County's last remaining Coastal Watch Station that served our nation during World War II. The building dates back to pre-war times; unfortunately the submarine watchtower was destroyed by Hurricane Francis in 2004. This site, used as a "safe haven" for seafarers from 1903 to shortly after WWII, housed the men that guarded our shores. The men who were stationed here were often called upon to row their longboats into treacherous seas to rescue floundering sailors whose ships had encountered misfortune. Many schooner captains owed their lives, and the lives of their crew and passengers, to these brave men. The Coastal Watch Station was decommissioned after WWII and the Sebastian Beach Inn was born. It rapidly became the favorite beachside restaurant and bar for residents and tourists alike.

During the late 1960's and 1970's the S.B.I house drink, the "Bahama Mama," became a legend. Those who were hearty enough to drink three Bahama Mamas were permitted the honor of writing their names upon the wall and when the wall was filled they wrote on the ceiling! Many famous names graced the S.B.I walls including those of some of our first astronauts, the first Soviet cosmonaut, movie stars, and political leaders.

The S.B.I fell into complete ruin during the 1980's and became a candidate for the bulldozer; but the present owner couldn't let this historic site be destroyed. After almost a year of renovation and rebuilding the S.B.I opened again in 1990 and has been serving the community with its own special brand of hospitality since that time.

If you point your finger toward the ocean from our deck, you just might be pointing to a real treasure! During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Spanish Galleons made the return trip to the King and Queen of Spain loaded with treasures of gold and silver found in the New World. They travelled in fleets to ward off the marauding pirates that plied the waters off the East Coast. Hurricanes and rough seas caused some ships making the journey to flounder and sink. In 1715 one of these fleets, the Plate Fleet with fourteen ships, sank during a hurricane off the East Coast of Florida. The galleons sank from Melbourne Beach to Ft Pierce and each was loaded with treasure.

A number of treasure hunters have worked these waters in order to find these galleons; and some have gone home rich. Mel Fisher, of Key West, one of the more famous treasure hunters, was successful in his searches off the east coast of Florida. He joined a group called Real Eight, and together they found gold and silver coins, large gold "mint pieces", from the Mexico City mint that were as large as a man's palm, in addition to fabulous gold and silver jewelry. One piece of treasure was actually found within the shoreline. That was only one ship; there are more than a dozen from the Spanish Plate Fleet still waiting to give up their wealth. It is said that pieces of gold still wash up on South Brevard's shore so when you visit the S.B.I check out the beach; you may stumble across a historic and valuable find.

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