



"How do we get to Key West without going over any bridges?" ...That and similar questions are what Wendy Hewitt of Keys Castaways Antiques Consignment has been asked more than a few times over her years of owning two retail businesses in Key Largo. The bulk of her clientele at Keys Castaways are "my locals," as Wendy lovingly refers to them, but for a few months out of the year, the snowbirds and tourists stream into her shop right alongside the local treasure hunters. The part-time visitors not only browse the eclectic inventory, but also come away with information on which restaurants will take the best care of them, which realtors will treat them the most fairly and which clubs will feature the music they are keen to hear... oh... and of course reminding the geographically-challenged non-locals that other than going by plane, boat or zip-line, bridges happen play a big part in getting to Key West!

Some of you may recall that in early 2003, an overgrown, seemingly abandoned

wood frame building situated on the bayside site of the old Blue Lagoon Trailer park, (MM98.6), suddenly blossomed into a brightly colored shop named Keys Castaways. Utilizing every square inch of space in the 60+ year old transformed tiki hut, a wonderland of 'Keys Funky' artifacts appeared; antiques, vintage clothes, furniture, local artwork, jewelry and more. The old Dade County pine floors, huge uncut rafter beams and columns lent themselves perfectly as a canvas for the jumbled display of items from around the world. The umbrella-covered pink and blue picnic tables in the shop front yard were a great spot for shopper's companions to finish their cigars, people-watch and enjoy the key lime tinged ice water from the big cooler that was kept filled every day. A relative newcomer to town had quit the corporate rat race and invented Keys Castaways in her new hometown of Key Largo.

Hewitt moved to Key Largo 15 years ago from a small town

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in New England, famous for its overwhelming number of antique shops. Wendy spent many summer breaks working in those shops.

Keys Castaways thrived until 2008, when the Miami-based landlords of the property informed Wendy that they intended to "bulldoze" the historic little building, "to make way for an exclusive resort for eastern Europeans." The resort never materialized... nor did the 'ultra-chic' condos that were slated to be built. The location is now home to an RV Resort... not a shred of the natural hammock left.

Wendy took time off, read some books and then reluctantly took a corporate job on the mainland, commuting each day and hating every minute of it. She would occasionally run into some of her old customers in town and the lament was always the same; "WHEN are you going to reopen?!" For five long years, Wendy secretly harbored the idea of reopening, halfheartedly watching the rental prices of newly available commercial properties. She had a new boyfriend, Franco... a long-time resident and businessman in Key Largo who owns a chunk of commercial property in the

center median at MM98.7. He uses a portion of the property for his own aluminum, canvas & marine upholstery business, The TeeTop Factory, and leases the balance of space. When his tenant did not renew their lease this past May, Franco offered the space to Wendy.

This past Labor Day weekend signaled a 'soft opening' for the NEW Keys Castaways, located in the median at 98750 Overseas Highway... just a wee bit south of Mother Ocean Nautical Consignment Shop. Seven days a week from 10am-6pm you will find Wendy at the counter of the store. Franco is the marine expert and auto evaluator... in addition to speaking fluent Italian to the female clientele!

In addition to consignments, customers can bring in items anytime, and have them evaluated, and walk out with cash. Whether it's a Keys Cruiser, a flats boat, an old wedding gown or a work of art from a relative, bring it to Keys Castaways for an honest and fair evaluation. Support local businesses by kicking off your holiday shopping right here in town... Call 305.451.1141 for more info.



Stop in at Keys Castaways and browse the eclectic inventory.

The 'King' of Rock 'n' Roll is Grand Marshal of Key Largo Boat Parade

In keeping with this year's Boat Parade theme, 'Christmas Rocks,' the King of Rock 'n' Roll himself has been named this year's Grand Marshal. Elvis (AKA Tim Shepherd) will join VIP guests aboard the Grand Marshal Boat. You will be able to see and hear

Elvis during the boat parade and after the Parade at Sundowners when an 'Elvis Live' performance by Tim Shepherd will take place on the point before the awards.

Tim Shepherd has appeared as Elvis Presley on a number of Carnival Cruise ships, and for various charitable benefits in the Florida Keys and Homestead. Some may remember his exciting performances at Founders Park and The Elks Club.

The annual Key Largo Boat Parade sets sail at 7:30 PM, Saturday December 14th. Illuminated boats ranging from 55 ft. motors to sail-

boats to kayaks and paddle boards will traverse the waters of Blackwater Sound to kick off the holidays with this annual tradition.

Best public viewing locations for the parade are the Marriott Resort, Sundowners, Senor Frioles, Jimmy Johnson's Big Chill and the Caribbean Club.

Entry to the parade is free and all boats are entered into a \$500 cash drawing. The only boat not eligible is the 'Best Overall' grand prize winner. There is also over \$1500 in cash as well as trophies and other prizes to be awarded.

Everyone is invited to the awards ceremony beginning at 10pm on the point at Sundowners, hosted by local celebrities retired meteorologist Don Noe, and local captains Spencer Slate and Skip Bradeen.

Sign up as soon as possible; download entry form at keylargoboatparade.com or call Sue Finney 305-394-3736.



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TO ENTER, CONTACT:
Sue Finney
305-394-3736
or go to
www.keylargoboatparade.com