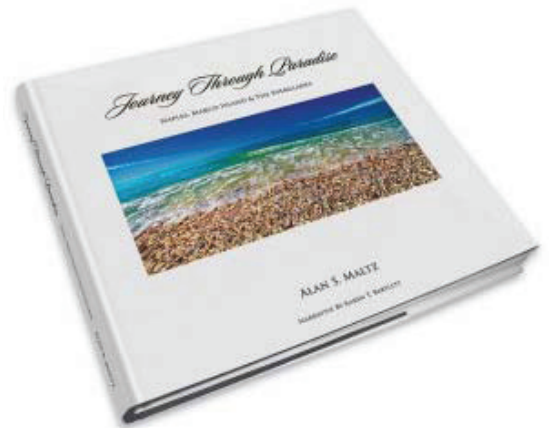


Paradise by the book

Journey Through Paradise: Naples, Marco Island & The Everglades, photographs by Alan S. Maltz with a narrative by Karen T. Bartlett. Light Flight Publications. 144 pages. \$60.

This gorgeous coffee-table collection of fine art photographs would be an attraction for any lover of the natural environment as interpreted by a watchful and skillful photographer. For those who make their homes or take their vacations in Southwest Florida, it has the added attraction of capturing the particular flavor of our slice of the Sunshine State. That Alan Maltz brings to his meticulous craft a unique vision and a master's signature of style makes this new book truly a portfolio of pleasure.

Though there is much energy in the play of light and shadow in Mr. Maltz's work, it is held in check by a prevailing calm – a respectful stillness. This effect comes in part from the artist's preferred working times. Shooting at daybreak or sundown, he can find places that at those times are uncluttered by human activity. This, of course, is less of an issue at an unpopulated place like the Big Cypress Swamp and more of a concern in tightly packed residential and commercial areas.



Alan Maltz seeks the striking, enhancing moments during which the light is just right in its color, intensity, and angle, and the subject is perfectly revealed. This means being alert to seize upon the best opportunities that come along. His “drive – stop – shoot” method depends upon being ready for good luck. It is our good luck that readiness is part of his skill set.

We expect artists to give the familiar a sense of freshness, to change our way of seeing. One way in which Alan Maltz accomplishes this end is through giving us unexpected perspectives. On occasion, he shoots down from an elevated perspective, as in the spectacular “Fifth Avenue Overview,” that allows us to see the iconic neighborhood anew.

Another way of changing perspective is by employing the fisheye lens, taking advantage of its hemispherical or concave distortion to create what he calls “otherworldly” images. “Beach Dreams,” a Marco Island view, is one such scene. Mr. Maltz’s photographs of the familiar Naples Museum of Art and of Artis-Naples transform these structures in fascinating ways.

A major portion of Collier County is represented in the selected photographs. Settings include not only the major communities and wildlife preserves, but also Immokalee, Chokoloskee, Ochopee, Everglades City, Keewayden Island, and Corkscrew Swamp. Residential and commercial Naples (but with people absent) is abundantly included, as are such adjacent natural /recreational sites as Clam Pass, Gordon Pass, and Delnore Wiggins State Park.

Among the glories of this collection are two “books within a book.” Clearly two places of beauty that tempted and challenged Mr. Maltz beyond the others are Big Cypress Swamp and Naples Botanical Garden. “Violet Is the Night” is a breathtaking panoramic view in Big Cypress – one of many stunning long views and middle range views.

This photographer is also a magi of the close-up. “Shades of Blue” brilliantly reveals the coloration of the Little Blue Heron in light-streaked shadow, as well as the color of her eggs. “The Gatekeepers” captures the protective sternness of two Burrowing Owls (discovered on Marco Island). “Nature By Design” celebrates the patterns and hues of a Dutchman’s Pipe blossom at the Naples Botanical Garden



To read this review in full, as it appears in (as feature article) in the November 14, 2013 Naples Florida Weekly, click here: [Florida Weekly – Maltz 1](#), here: [Florida Weekly – Maltz 2](#), and here: [Florida Weekly – Maltz 3](#).

In truncated form, it also appears in the November 14 Fort Myers edition and the November 13 Bonita Springs edition.