

THE NEWS-PRESS

SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 2006 | PUBLISHED SINCE 1884

news-press.com

FINAL | \$1.50

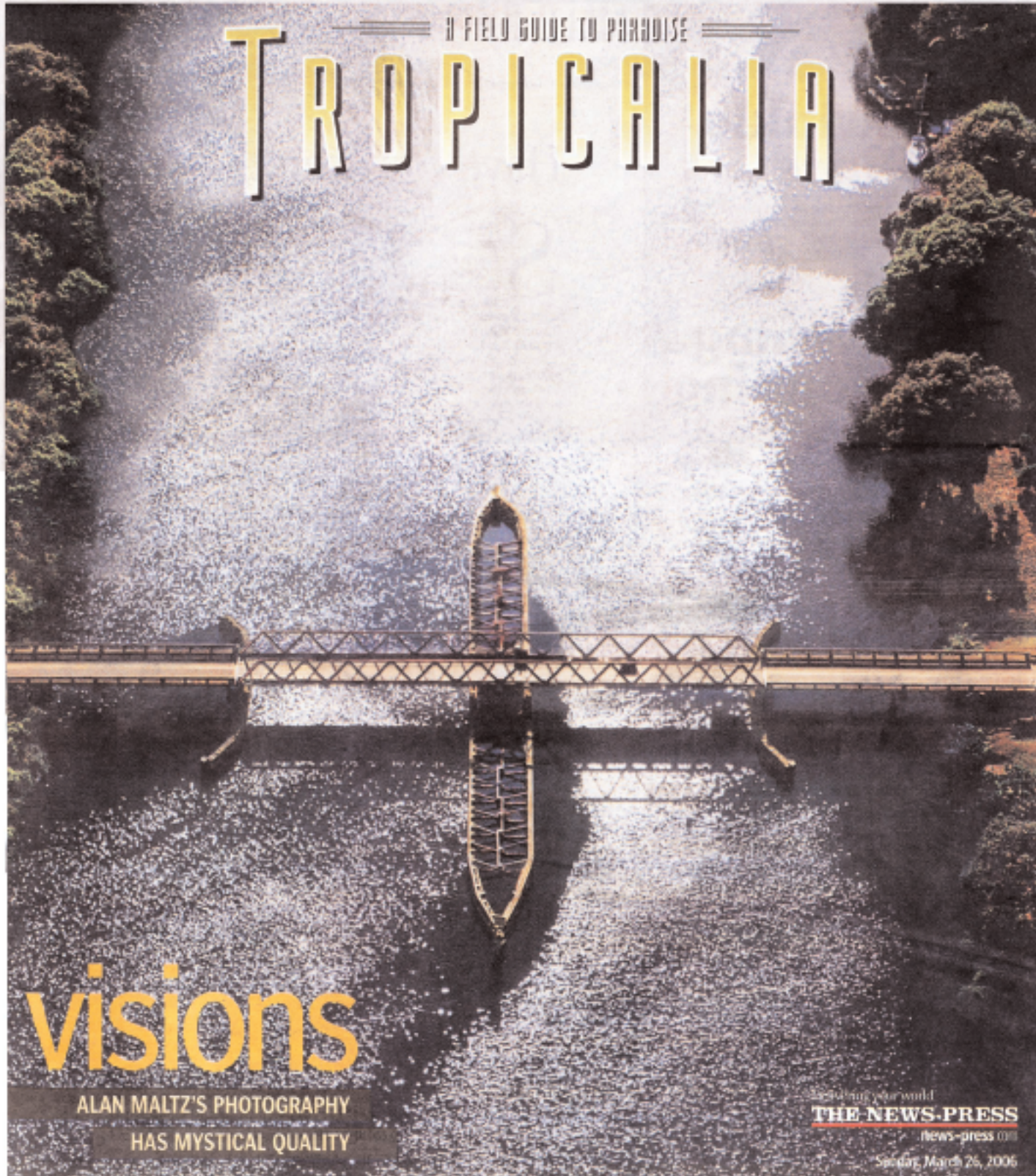
WHAT'S
INSIDE



Natural
talent

Photographer
Alan Maltz captures
Florida's beauty
on film.

■ TROPICALIA



A FIELD GUIDE TO PARADISE

TROPICALIA

visions

ALAN MALTZ'S PHOTOGRAPHY
HAS MYSTICAL QUALITY

Best of our world
THE NEWS-PRESS
news-press.com

Sunday, March 26, 2006

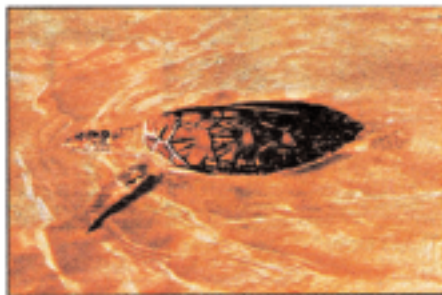
Natural talent

Alan Maltz heard a voice during his graduation ceremony at Long Island University say, 'Pick up a camera.' He had never taken a photograph before, but he heeded the voice, traveling to Europe the next day with a new camera in tow. On a trip to visit a friend in Florida he bought a house in the Keys on a whim. Now he spends his days capturing the state's beauty on film.

Many a frequent flier has marveled at Alan Maltz's evocative wildlife photography on permanent display at the Southwest Florida International Airport and wondered, how long must the patient Mr. Maltz wait to get such extraordinary shots?

Maltz wastes no time with an answer as we speak by phone from his home on Sugarloaf Key about his glorious new coffee-table book, "Florida: Beyond the Blue Horizon" (Light Flight, \$65):

"Here's the correction on that one: There's absolutely no waiting. Everyone that walks into my galleries thinks that I wait hours for these shots to happen, but for me, I just capture them as I go and I really do not wait for any shots. I just put myself in the position where the light is perfect and things happen for me. I'm fortunate to be doing what I was meant to be doing, and I think it all works as one."



HOW DOES HE DO IT?

Though his results might seem other-worldly, Alan Maltz shoots in good old-fashioned 35-millimeter format. He uses Fuji Velvia film, ASA 50. "You need a lot of light and a fast lens," he explains, "but it gives me the spontaneity to capture these images and the quality to stand up to major blowups such as my 40-by-60-inch images at Southwest International Airport."

— Jay MacDonald

If that all sounds a bit mystical, there's a reason. Maltz has been guided in his art by voices, for want of a better phrase, since the day the Brooklyn native graduated in psychology from Long Island University.

"How it started was, the day of graduation, Helen Hayes was speaking and I heard a voice that said 'Pick up a camera' at the ceremony. It was just a wave of knowledge or something, a message. Before that time, I had never had a camera in my hands or taken a picture or anything. And I took that message very seriously." Indeed, that very day, Maltz went out and bought a camera.

"(I) left for Europe with it the next day and took my first picture two days later. It's called 'Meeting in Marseilles,' and is hanging in my gallery. It's also on my Web site (alanmaltz.com)."

Following graduation, Maltz opened a health food store in Woodstock, N.Y. Then a friend invited him visit to Miami. They drove down to the Keys on a day trip and stopped to visit another friend in Sugarloaf Shores, where fate intervened again.

"I just fell in love with this guy's house and surroundings," Maltz recalls. "I'd never been to the Keys before, never went to Key West on that trip, but I knew right then and there that I wanted to come back and live in this house. I came back three months later and bought the house and I'm talking to you from that house 28 years later."

Maltz runs six days a week. He follows a ritual while running. "I dedicate the last part of my run to everyone I've loved in my life, including the animals I've lived with. ... So I have a whole list of things in my mind that sort of sets a pattern for my run but also transcends it."

Maltz now may be the most recognizable photographer in the Sunshine State. In addition to his popular coffee-table books and galleries in Key West and Hawk's Cay Resort on Duck Key, he has been designated Florida's Official Fine Art Photographer for his work with high-profile advertising campaigns for the state of Florida and the Florida Keys. He will add a Southwest Florida jewel to his coffee-table books early next year with "Visions of Beauty: The Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel."

Getting singularly breathtaking shots like these requires a touch of the mystic.

"It came from a spiritual connection and that's the basis of how I do my work," says Maltz. "I just go and put the effort out and things happen. I know it sounds a little over the edge, but that's exactly what this is about for me. It's just meant to be. When it's meant to be, it defies the odds."



IN THE LIGHT



SILVER PALM SUNSET



PHOTO FINISH