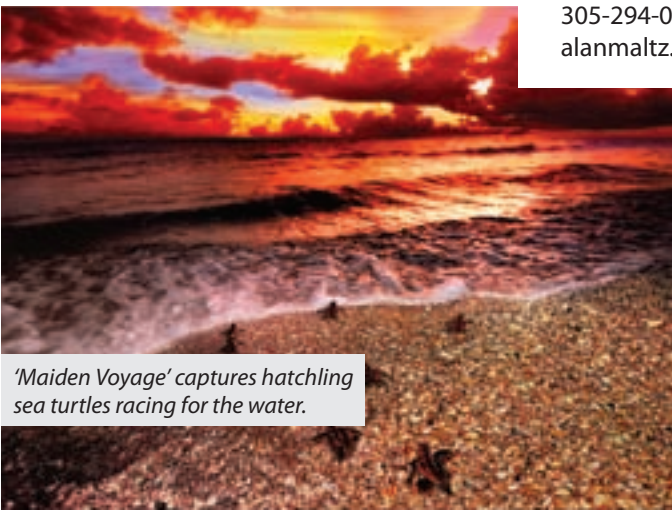




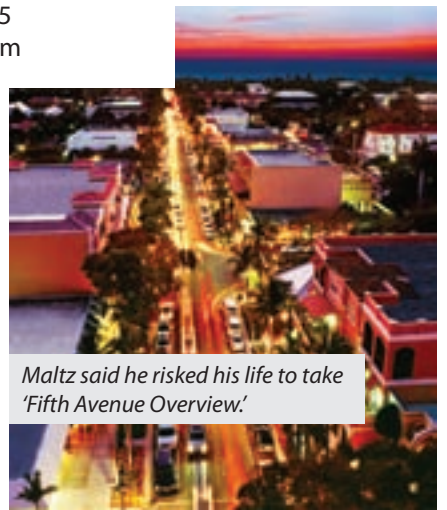
*'A Guiding Light' by Alan Maltz depicts rosette spoonbills heading towards the skyline.*

**Alan S. Maltz Gallery**  
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ALAN MALTZ/Contributed



*'Maiden Voyage' captures hatchling sea turtles racing for the water.*



*Maltz said he risked his life to take 'Fifth Avenue Overview.'*

# Local photographer captures essence of Florida

*Alan Maltz has the gift of being in the right place at the right time*

By Alex Press

Photographer Alan Maltz will do anything for the perfect shot, including risking his life.

"When I was trying to get a shot of 5th Street in Fort Myers, the only way to get the shot I wanted of the strip was to climb up a 127-foot crane like a ladder," said Maltz. On his first attempt he only made it halfway when he realized he was carrying too much equipment. So he returned the next day with an assistant.

"And when I got to the top I realized it was not the angle I wanted. So I had to walk on the top section," Maltz said, then added, "I am still alive!"

Maltz travels around the state to capture iconic images. He has been named The Official

Wildlife Photographer of Florida by a number of organizations and often hops on dirt roads, trudges through wetlands and traces pioneers' footsteps to find the perfect shot. Mud, rust and the unknown do not get in the way of his adventure to get the right snap.

"I saw a dramatic scene about three football fields away of rosette spoonbills next to a fire lit sky ... I lost my rubber boats on the way over to take the picture. There was something spiritual about the whole experience. I titled it 'A Guiding Light,'" said Maltz.

Maltz said he had no inkling about his passion for photography until the day he graduated from college. In the moment before he was called up to receive the diploma, he said he heard a voice tell him to buy a

camera. After leaving Long Island University he went straight to a camera shop on Broadway and 33rd Street and purchased one to take on his planned trip to Europe.

"I did not know what the photos were going to look like until they were developed. This was long before the digital age. The picture 'Meeting in Marseilles' was my first official piece and it captured a lot of emotion," said Maltz. "In fact, I just switched over from film last year."

His photographs have an aesthetic quality. Berenice Barber works at the Alan S. Maltz Gallery and helps customers find photos that would look good in their homes. She said she feels one of Maltz's pieces can be a room-changer.

"The bright wildlife in his work sets a mood of relaxation, like being in nature," she said. "It can be the centerpiece for creating a warm, welcoming feel for the home."