

SOUTHERN LIVING • TRAVEL

# Experience the Vintage Charm of Anna Maria Island This Winter

Plan a trip to Anna Maria Island just up the coast from Tampa, FL.

By Tracey Minkin | January 16, 2020



"What a Florida postcard!" developer Will Bean must have thought over 100 years ago, seeing this seahorse-shaped, 7-mile-long barrier island with white sand washed by the sparkling waves of the Gulf of Mexico on the west and lapped by the deep blue bay waters to the east. It would be an irresistible escape for winter-weary Northerners, for folks fleeing yellow fever in Tampa just up the coast, and for anyone else who sought a ticket to paradise.

Inheriting the land from his father (Anna Maria Island's first homesteader) in 1892, Bean worked with fellow promoter and developer Charles Roser to make the island into an escape ready for investment. With a knack for publicity, he even purchased exotic seashells to secretly scatter along the beaches every night so tourists would find them—and write home of this shell-seeker's dream.