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Wish You Were Here: Classic Florida Motel and Restaurant Advertising

Tim Hollis

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The golden age of Florida kitsch

“The hotels, motels, and restaurants that catered to Florida’s tourists before Disney have been lovingly explored, unearthed, highlighted, and celebrated in a lavishly illustrated ‘souvenir’ of a forgotten period in Florida history.”—Brian Rucker, author of *Arcadia* and *Image and Reality*

For most of the state’s existence, Florida’s economy has been driven by tourism and tourists. And after a carefree day on the beach, they need a place to sleep and eat.

Wish You Were Here is a nostalgic look back at the days when a clever slogan (“Sleep to the Song of the Surf”), a pink-and-aqua paint job, a swimming pool, and air-conditioned rooms—combined with aggressive advertising through postcards, brochures, magazines, billboards, placemats, and neon signs—were the keys to capturing the tourists’ dollars.

Tim Hollis began collecting this memorabilia in the 1960s, when he travelled with his parents on vacation in Florida. Arranged like a scrapbook, his lighthearted review of the most interesting and unusual hotel, motel, and restaurant advertising will make you remember childhood vacations fondly—or wonder why anyone would have ever eaten or slept *there.*

?The nearly five hundred color images are accompanied by humorous captions. They depict unique mom-and-pop motels, early advertising from hotel chains, and countless pirate-themed seafood restaurants. The book is organized around the traditional tourism regions of the state, from the Gulf Coast’s Miracle Strip to the Keys’ Paradise Islands. So sit back, enjoy the trip, and please don’t kick the back of the driver’s seat!

Tim Hollis is the author of numerous books celebrating southern history and popular culture, including *See Rock City*, *Florida’s Miracle Strip*, *Dixie before Disney,* and *Selling the Sunshine State.* He lives in Birmingham, Alabama.

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