



## Welcome to Paradise Lodge

Thank you for choosing Paradise Lodge for your saltwater fly fishing holiday. My wife and I, along with our talented staff, are here for you and will do our very best to meet, and even exceed your expectations.

If you have *any* questions, or if there is anything that needs to be brought to my attention, please don't hesitate to come to me or in my absence my wife, Lana. We want you to be happy and satisfied while staying at Paradise Lodge and will give our very best effort to make that happen.

Thank you again for joining us at Paradise Lodge. We have a great week ahead of us, and are very excited to have you as our guests, and to share with you our fishing and genuine hospitality.

Enjoy your stay...

Muchos Saludos,

Eric and Lana Ersch  
Paradise Lodge Staff

# Daily Schedule

## **6:30 a.m.**

A delicious breakfast is served in our dining room to get you off to a good start. Fresh fruit, cereals, yogurt, marmalade, dark and light bread, ham, cheese an American-style breakfast, that changes every day, as well as a cook-to-order breakfast is available.

## **7:30 a.m.**

Trucks leave the lodge. To find out who will be your guide and where you are fishing for the day, check the bulletin board located in the dining room. For trips to Espiritu Santo Bay or Chetumal Bay, an earlier departure from the lodge may be in order.

## **12:00 p.m.**

Lunch is taken on the fly. A box lunch that includes a sandwich, chips, fruit and cookies will be packed in the morning for you and sent with the guide. Plenty of water, sodas and beer will be included in your cooler. Please let us know if you want anything special packed for your lunch.

## **5:00 – 6:00 p.m.**

The trucks are scheduled to return to the lodge between five and six p.m. The guides will wash your rods and reels with fresh water and place them on our rod racks or brought to your room, whatever you prefer.

Grab a cold beer or have the bartender make you a margarita or any other cocktail that you prefer, and enjoy some tasty appetizers. Dinner is scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

## **7:00 p.m.**

Dinner is served. A delicious evening meal is served in our dining room with complimentary wine. At cocktail hour or after dinner, Eric will sit down with you and make a plan for the next day. The information on where you are fishing, who your guide will be, and what time you are departing will be detailed on the bulletin board in the dining room.

Enjoy your dinner and sleep fast; tomorrow we have a full day ahead of us.

*The daily schedule is by necessity relatively flexible. Weather and fishing conditions can force us to change our fishing plans. Please let us know if you would like to schedule your day with us in a different manner.*

# General Information and Frequently Asked Questions

## **Electricity:**

Electricity at Paradise Lodge is provided by two diesel generators, 110 volts AC, 60Hz. Electrical outlets are American-style (two prongs), the same as you have at home. The generator is started at approximately 5:00 a.m.. We usually shut the generator down in the middle of the day while you are out fishing. The generator is restarted at 5:00 p.m. and will run until approximately 11:00 p.m. If the weather is such that we need air conditioning or ceiling fans through the night, we leave the generator running. If for some reason you need electricity and the generator is off, please let us know.

## **Water & Ice:**

All drinking water and water used for making ice is purified. The water from the tap and shower is from a well. **Do not drink the water from the tap and shower.** Use bottled or purified water supplied by the lodge for drinking and brushing your teeth. Fresh water on the Yucatan Peninsula is precious; please help the lodge conserve water, whenever possible.

## **Alcohol and Drinks:**

All drinks are included in your Paradise Lodge vacation. The lodge has local Mexican beer, tequila, vodka, gin, and rum for cocktails. Coke, Coke-lite (diet), orange, and lemon/lime soda are available as well. Cold beers can be packed in your cooler for each day you are on the water. Delicious Chilean and Argentine wines are served with dinners. Try one of our Margaritas, they are great!

## **Food:**

Primary meals are served in our lovely dining room and are a casual event. Meals are an excellent blend of Mexican and international cuisine with emphasis on fresh meats and fish, and fresh fruits and vegetables. If you have any specific diet request, foods dislikes, or require any special dietary needs, please let us know immediately and we'll do our best to accommodate.

## **Tipping:**

Leaving a gratuity is a personal decision and should be based on service provided and the general attitude of the staff in helping make your holiday as enjoyable as possible. For the fishing guides we recommend leaving \$200 per person, per week.

For the lodge staff we recommend \$100 - \$150 per person, per week. An envelope is provided for your gratuity. Please give your gratuity to the manager at the end of your stay and he will distribute it to the staff. Any special instructions for tipping should be conveyed to the manager. Please pay your gratuity in U.S. Dollars as the lodge is not set-up to take credit cards, traveler's checks or personal checks.

## **Phone service, Skype, E-mail and Internet:**

There is phone service at the lodge. A calling card is required to dial outside numbers. There is WiFi at the lodge that should allow you to use the internet with your laptop, if you bring one. There is also a lodge computer that you can use to check email or use SKYPE. Please ask Eric or Lana for assistance in using the lodge's computer. PLEASE be courteous and limit your lodge computer time to 10 minutes or less.

**Valuables:** Although theft is not common on this remote coast, we highly recommend that you place cash, valuables, expensive jewelry and such in the lodge safe. We are not responsible for lost or stolen articles.

## **Refrigerator in your room:**

The refrigerator in your room is stocked daily with bottled waters, soda pops, beer and snacks. If you would like something special stocked, let us know.

**Air conditioners and ceiling fans:**

Your room at Paradise Lodge has an air conditioner, ceiling fan and windows that open to allow circulation. On your day of arrival one of the staff will give you a rundown on how to operate the A/C unit. Please watch your rod tips on the ceiling fan blades – they are murder on fly rods.

**Swimming, snorkeling and beach walking:**

We are located beachside of the second largest barrier reef in the world. The swimming and snorkeling opportunities are world-class, and we encourage you to give them both a try. We have snorkeling equipment for your use...just ask one of the staff and they will get you set-up and point you in the right direction. If you are going to swim or snorkel, please let us know where you are going and when you expect to be back at the lodge. We also strongly suggest you take a “buddy” along with you. Lastly, please be respectful of the reef and the marine life that makes it home there. Do not touch the reef or any animals, and please do not move them. THANK YOU!

**Things that bite, stick or sting:**

There are mosquitoes on the Yucatan coastline, especially near the mangroves or on the leeward side of the prevailing wind. As well, there are small biting gnats called “sand fleas”, (the locals call them chaquiste) and Tabanos (horseflies). A good quality insect repellent with DEET will keep mosquitoes and sand fleas away. For the Tabanos you need to cover up, or swat them – DEAD! If you forget your insect repellent, let us know - we have plenty on hand. This is the tropics and we occasionally have creepy-crawly creatures get into the lodge. Please be sure to check your shoes and clothes for any of these creatures before dressing.

**Safety Precautions:**

We want your fishing holiday with us to be a relaxing and enjoyable experience and with a few small precautions, it will be just that.

- 1.) **WEAR IT:** We highly recommend you wear a lifejacket while in the boat, especially while the boat is under power and moving.
- 2.) **PROTECT YOUR PEEPERS:** Please wear your sunglasses at all times while fishing, or in the boat. One stray fly or misplaced cast can easily damage an eye – for life.
- 3.) **SLIP, SLOP, SLAP:** **Slip** on a shirt, **Slop** on sunscreen, and **Slap** on a hat. Please do not underestimate the sun’s ability to burn.
- 4.) **BUDDY SYSTEM:** If you are going to take a beach walk, or go swimming or snorkeling, please go with a buddy and let one of the staff know where you are headed, and how long you expect to be gone.
- 5.) **WATCH YOUR STEP:** We don’t recommend you taking off for a jungle stroll. It’s better to stay in open areas or on well-cleared paths. Some of the jungle inhabitants (plant and animal), although not aggressive, are rather protective.

**Emergencies:**

If there is an emergency situation in the middle of the night, please immediately notify Eric Ersch, the lodge manager. Eric’s house is located just in the back of the lodge.

## **Last Day, Check-Out**

On the night before you are scheduled to depart the lodge you will be given specific information and instructions on your departure the following morning. This information will also be written on the bulletin board in the dining room.

The night prior to your departure is a great time to settle any lodge charges and take care of gratuities, as departure mornings have a way of getting hectic and rushed.

On your morning of departure, please have your bags packed and positioned inside your room by the door, ready to load in the vehicles before heading down to breakfast.

You can leave your carry-on bag on the bed, or take it with you to breakfast.

During breakfast your luggage will be loaded in the vehicles, and made ready for departure to Cancun.

**We appreciate your punctuality in order to get to the airport on time.**

## **2011 Special Rewards Rebooking Information**

The entire staff at Paradise Lodge would like to thank you for choosing us for your saltwater fly fishing vacation. We hope you had an enjoyable stay and that a return trip is in the works.

As we have many more requests for rod space at Paradise Lodge than we can accommodate, we have established a rebooking policy.

Book within 30 days of your departure from Paradise Lodge and lock-in a great rate for 2011 - \$2,295!

Give The Fly Shop a call (800) 669-3474, or email them at [travel@theflyshop.com](mailto:travel@theflyshop.com) within 30 days of departure to reserve a 2011 date, and you can lock-in a rate of \$2,295 per week, per person, double occupancy (Saturday – Saturday). That's a savings of \$300 per person when compared to the normal 2011 weekly rate.

# A History of Paradise Lodge

## Punta Placer – Yucatan Peninsula Quintana Roo, Mexico

In the late 60's, the lagunas adjacent to the Caribbean coast that are now the foundation of the Paradise program were first "discovered" by Tony Gonzalez (then Alcalde of Cozumel, and owner of Boca Paila). Tony had a small plane and loved flying. Sadly, he ended up losing his life in a flying accident, but not before establishing that part of the world as one of the great bonefish destinations. He loved fishing as much as flying, and constantly searched the entire Yucatan for new and exciting hotspots. The now famous Casa Blanca was called Punta Pajaros when he built the spot, along with the airstrip. Tony would also land on the beach south of Bahia Espiritu Santo with friends like Chico Fernandez, and fish the most bizarre and amazing places imaginable.

Tony and the legendary Vic Barothy were the first known sport fishermen to ever fish the Paradise lagoons. At the time, and for decades afterward, they were stuffed with small tarpon and huge snook. The snook are less plentiful now (thanks largely to the demand for them as table fare), but the tarpon remain in strong numbers, probably because there's no commercial market for them.

Years later, Dial Dunkin, a wonderfully eccentric banker from Harlingen, Texas, built a retreat for himself and friends south of Punta Herrero, and called it Paradise. He installed a staff that had been trained in the many bird (duck/pigeon/dove/quail) hunting operations that he owned and operated in Mexico, and later opened it to sport fishermen. Mike Settles, brother of Casa Blanca's Bobby Settles was on hand to introduce me to the fishing at Paradise nearly 20 years ago. It was an October week and we fished the (then) fishing frontier of Espiritu Santo, along with the lagoons. My last day recorded the capture (and release) of 24 tarpon over 20 pounds, memorable - among other reasons - because the number of fish coincided with the day's date. The Fly Shop was instrumental in the success of Paradise, and sent the majority of anglers to Dial's operation for the few years that he had it open to sport fishermen.

In 1986 the huge (5,280 square km.) Sian Ka'an biosphere reserve was formed near the Paradise property line by a group of conservationists. Their mission was/is the conservation of the biodiversity of this Mexican National Park, which was selected as a UNESCO <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UNESCO> World Heritage Site [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World\\_Heritage\\_Site](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) in 1987. Only two sport fishing operations have ever been licensed to fish inside its southern accessed border. Paradise is one, and Casa Blanca is the other. Paradise and Casa Blanca today remain the only licensed operators. Casa Blanca limits their fishing forays to the spectacularly

remote Bahia Espiritu Santo adjacent to its satellite lodge (Playa Blanca), while Paradise approaches the Bay from the south and extends their fishing menu down to the Belizean border, and the Bay of Chetumal.

In 1993 we helped Dial with the sale of Paradise to our friend Tom Woodward, and his wife Cheryl. Tom had guided for tarpon in the Florida Keys after college and a lodge like Paradise was the fulfillment of his lifelong dream. It was after he had retired from Boeing, and he and Cheryl devoted more than a decade of their lives to making the lodge successful, and truly cementing its reputation as a first class fly rod destination. The Woodwards selected The Fly Shop as their exclusive agent, and we were very proud to help with the building of that reputation.

After ten years of successfully operating Paradise Lodge and living in Mexico year-round, Tom and Cheryl were ready to start the next phase of their life and were starting to develop some health issues; so, in 2006 decided to sell the lodge to Alejandro (Alex) de Tomaso, the angling enthusiast who had developed Estancia Maria Behety into one of the most popular fishing destinations on the planet. Alejandro's father, the famous Argentine race car enthusiast and Italian automobile manufacturer, as well as hotelier, had instilled an eclectic passion for entrepreneurship in his son, and Alex managed to build Paradise into a spectacular facility just in time to welcome the arrival of Hurricane Dean on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007, to the Mexican shoreline.

Paradise suffered the full, devastating brunt of the hurricane, and the entire remodeled and refurbished facility was demolished in hours. The storm was so powerful (200 mph winds) it ripped a 35 KW diesel generator from its bolt anchors and carried it more than a hundred yards inland, where it rested in the mangroves, along with some of Alex's vehicles (still bearing their dealer plates). The maelstrom didn't even leave a skeleton of the lodge, but only a bare foundation.

Nearly two years and a fortune in restoration later, Paradise is opening this season. The lodge has been completely reconstructed, and will be managed by Eric Ersch and his wife Lana, two incredibly wonderful, talented, and experienced saltwater lodge veterans. The marriage of personnel, location, and angling should quickly raise Paradise to the upper echelon in the world of sport fishing lodges.

- Mike Michalak