

The Kiteboarder

THEKITEBOARDER.COM

magazine



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\$4.95 USA



NPX's Josh Noo adds a little spice to his launch.



MOTHER OF MANY WATERS By Melissa Gil | Photos by www.tomclarkphoto.com **BIMINI, BAHAMAS**

Picture a Caribbean paradise: Beautiful white sand beaches, enchanting little mangrove islands and turquoise water so crystal clear that you can see everything to the bottom. You have just visualized Bimini, the westernmost chain of islands in the Bahamas lying on the eastern edge of the Gulf Stream, only 49 nautical miles from South Florida. This small island paradise is rich with a colorful history and beautiful natural resources. Bimini was once explored in search of the Fountain of Youth, believed to be the place where the first signs of Atlantis rising would appear, and served as inspiration for some of Ernest Hemmingway's books. Today, the island is known as the sport fishing capital of the world and was brought to the attention of kiteboarding during the 2005 Bahamas Crossing, where two-man teams engaged in an intense race from Fort Lauderdale to Bimini.

WHAT IS THE OFFICIAL SITE NAME? Bimini, Bahamas. Bimini is a series of small islands, the largest being North Bimini and South Bimini. North Bimini is about seven miles (11 km) long and 700 feet (210 m) wide and is where the majority of resorts and riding spots are. South Bimini houses the airstrip for the airport and the small local community of Port Royale.

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME OF THE YEAR TO HIT THIS SPOT? The windy season is from October to May when the cold fronts roll through. The rest of the months you can get afternoon sea breezes.

WHAT IS THE BEST INTERNET SITE TO CHECK THE WINDY CONDITIONS? www.windfinder.com

HOW DO I GET THERE (AIRPORT, DRIVING, PARKING)? There are two ways to get there.

1-By air: You can fly from Fort Lauderdale into Bimini Airport located in South Bimini. Flights are only 20 minutes. If you are staying in the north, you have to take a taxi and then a water taxi to get from the south to the north.

2-By sea: From Miami/Fort Lauderdale, the boat ride can be 2 to 3 hours and you can rent a slip at one of the Marinas.

WHAT IS THE USUAL WIND DIRECTION? During season strong northwest to northeast winds.

WHAT GEAR SHOULD I BE SURE TO PACK? During the cold fronts the wind can be pretty strong so make sure you bring your smaller kites (6 to 10 meter). Bring your bigger kites, 12 to 16, for the days where the wind lays off a little. The windy season is also the coldest season so pack your shorty or full wetsuit to keep warm. If you visit during the summer you won't need your wetsuit, but you will need bigger kites.

WHAT CONDITIONS SHOULD I AVOID? Avoid offshore winds if you do not have a boat that can pick you up if something wrong happens and avoid really windy conditions if you do not have the right size kite or do not feel comfortable. There is always another day to kite.

WHAT IS THE LAUNCH/LANDING LIKE? On the ocean side of Bimini, you can find desolate white sand beaches to launch and land. On the bay side of Bimini, advanced riders can do a short swim to the shallows of the north side of the bay and self launch. Beginners will need boat assistance to get across the boat channel and launch. On the bay side, be sure to explore the mangrove islands!

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BEST PLACES TO EAT NEARBY? CJ's Deli, Blue Water Anchorage, Bimini Road and Bimini's Oyster Bar and Seafood. Expect the most delicious seafood!

WHO ARE THE LOCAL SCHOOLS AND SHOPS? There are currently no local shops or schools on the island.

The infinity pool at the Bimini Bay Resort provides premium viewing of the action.



Drift launching from the Marina dock.



Melissa heads out to snorkel the turquoise waves.



Bimini offers ideal freestyle conditions in a tropical setting.



WHERE SHOULD I STAY? The Bimini Bay Resort has been extra supportive of kiteboarding and is currently working with Cabrinha/Adventure Sports to host an event this spring. Resorts in North Bimini include Bimini Bay Resort, Bimini Big Game Fishing Club & Marina (from \$135/night), Bimini Blue Water Resort & Marina (from \$100), Seacrest Hotel & Marina (from \$90), as well as several small hotels and inns. Resorts in South Bimini are the Bimini Sands Resort & Marina (from \$250/night), South Bimini Yacht Club (n/a), and Bimini Beach Club & Marina (from \$185).

WHAT IS THE NIGHTLIFE LIKE? Alice Town is the main tourist center in the southernmost part of North Bimini. Its main road called the King's Highway is lined with hotels, marinas, shops, local restaurants and bars. At night, the street comes alive with a variety of entertainment including live music, drinking and dancing. The northernmost part of North Bimini is more remote and underdeveloped and South Bimini is even mellower.

WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO DO IF I GET SKUNKED? If there is no wind, no problem — there is plenty to do in Bimini! You can go diving and snorkeling to see shipwrecks and incredible marine life, hang out at the beach, or swim or explore the island on a kayak or SUP. Several companies also offer sailing, boating and fishing excursions.

ARE THERE ANY INTERESTING BITS OF TRAMA ABOUT THIS SPOT? Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon explored the Island of Bimini in 1513 in search of the Fountain of Youth. It is also believed that the Lost City of Atlantis is in the shallow waters off of Bimini. In 1968, a series of rectangular stones laid out in two straight parallel rows, known as the Bimini Stones, were discovered less than one mile off Bimini's north shore. Many believe that the Bimini Stones may have been a road that lead into Atlantis. Lastly, Some claim that the term "the real McCoy" was applied to the rum provided by William S. McCoy, who used Bimini to transport whiskey to America during the Prohibition era.

BIMINI RESOURCES:

- www.Bahamas.com
- www.Biminibayresort.com
- www.Tripadvisor.com (keyword Bimini)
- www.Adventuresportsmiami.com
(for updates on upcoming spring event)



Kent Marinkovic with his catch of the day.