

Fishing Adventures with Lace



sheepshead. They're good eating, and we couldn't resist the urge to fill our cooler. Because they were biting so well on live shrimp, I decided to try my Tsunami Holographic Shrimp baits. Sure enough, they worked! It was a great feeling to hook my first sheepshead on artificial bait. Much to our delight, we pulled up some nice pompano and flounder while working the artificial shrimp. Tim and I smiled at each other and thought about the dinner we would have later that evening.

After we had plenty of keepers in the boat, Tim suggested trolling for grouper. Letting our lines out, we steadily watched our rods. This was to make sure our diving lures kept the right movement under water. The rod tips were slowly shaking back and forth, so we knew our Yo-Zuri Hydro-Magnams were making the irresistible tight wiggle that attracts grouper.

Suddenly, my rod doubled over with a strike! I instinctively sprung up and grabbed the pole. My knuckles turned white on the rod, as I began to reel in a huge grouper. I fought hard, pulling against a fish determined to dive back under the rocks. It was a fun fight, and I was thrilled as water splashed up and sprayed my sunglasses. After pulling that giant in, we could hardly keep the lures in the water without reeling 'em up, sometimes two at a time.

Pulling the grouper in the boat was rewarding, even though we had to release the wily beasts. The legal grouper season is still closed, so we couldn't keep them. There's definitely no shortage of gags in the Sarasota, FL area. We caught grouper to our hearts' content, and it was the perfect ending to a great day.

The sun was starting to set, filling the sky with a golden glow as we headed back toward the marina. The water brimmed with hues of rich purple and sapphire blue. Fishing in my own backyard is a feeling that is truly irreplaceable. No matter where I will write from next, I'm a Florida girl at heart, and there's no place like home. Taking a few deep breaths after that wild trip, I gazed at the horizon and took a moment to soak in the feeling only my hometown waters can deliver. This after all, is where I fell in love with the quest to become a world-traveled angler.

Travels With Lace appears periodically in Coastal Angler Magazine and The Angler Magazine.

Just thinking of fishing allows me to hear the wind on the water, smell the salt in the air, see the skyline in the background, and feel the warmth of the sun across my shoulders. In order to battle the fiercest fish of the tropics, I've been living out of a suitcase for as long as I can remember. My customary fishing trips transport me to the Cayman Islands, Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica and beyond. When I finally had a week at my Florida home, it was a breath of fresh air to take a fishing trip in my own backyard. Strangely enough, I felt like I was on vacation.

Waking up to nice weather, I felt the usual itch to put my hands on some fish. I called my good friend, Tim Noe with Flying Fish Fleet Charters in Sarasota, FL. He's always game for a day out on the water. Since this was a last minute trip, we opted to do some shallow water fishing about one mile off the beach.

Tim and I decided to target grouper and sheepshead. With the water temperature at 68 degrees, we were confident we'd find what we were looking for. Heading out of Marina Jack's harbor, I felt the balminess of spring in the air, tiding off the chill of winter. A light breeze played with my hair, and the sun sparkled, reflecting on the aqua waves surrounding us.

As soon as we arrived at our initial fishing spot, we started hunting down the



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