

NAPLES

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BY THE NUMBERS

100 THINGS WE
LOVE ABOUT
COLLIER COUNTY

SEASONED VOICES

LONGTIME RESIDENTS
REMEMBER NAPLES

CELEBRATING

CENTENNIALS

HOT TAKES

VINTAGE-INSPIRED
LOOKS THAT SIZZLE

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**MINKA McDONALD SHARES
HER MEMORIES OF NAPLES
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AUDREY SNOW OWEN



VOICES

OF NAPLES

Naples celebrates its centennial anniversary this year. On December 1, 1923, Naples was incorporated as a municipality; 20 years later the population was recorded at around 1,200. Today, the U.S. Census Bureau reports nearly 20,000 people (snowbirds not included). To learn more about how our area has transformed, we sought out current residents from multiple decades—from someone in their 40s to someone in their 90s.

Through chats about their longtime lives in Naples, we unearthed when they came, why they came, what they remember, and their feelings about the evolution of Naples through the years.

BY GAYLENE SALOMONS | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AUDREY SNOW OWEN

Minka McDonald

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Minka McDonald moved to Naples when she was just 3 years old. Her family, including her grandparents, fled Jamaica, a country in political turmoil and on the verge of communism in the 1970s.

McDonald remembers Naples as a tiny beach town. After only one year, her family decided to move to Atlanta, Georgia, for business opportunities. “We lived in the Southern city for 11 years,” she says, but “we always returned to Naples and Marco Island for our family vacations.” Her parents had purchased a condo on Marco Island, making this possible. In 1991, at 15 years of age, McDonald and her family moved back to Naples in the middle of the school year; she and her sister enrolled at Barron Collier High School.

“We left our city, school, and all our friends and moved to this quiet town. We thought we were going to die,” she recalls. Fortunately, while attending Barron Collier High School and really “into running,” the sisters joined the track team, quickly finding themselves spending their weekends at the beach with a growing group of new friends—boating, tubing, and wakeboarding. “We fell in love with Naples.”

Her family rented a single-story house on Bayview Avenue that overlooked the bay directly at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples. The beach was at the end of the street. Watching sunsets on the beach became the activity of choice.

McDonald’s mother opened her own interior design company—Jinx McDonald Interior Designs—in 2000. Soon after, McDonald once again made Naples her permanent home and worked as her mom’s design assistant. At that time, she recalls thinking the town was booming and blowing up. “I couldn’t have imagined then that it could grow even more,” she says. “The recession slowed things down for a few years, but Naples keeps going and going.”

Did she ever think Naples would turn into the place it is today?

“It has been amazing and unbelievable to watch this town grow into a thriving city where everyone in the world wants to live. I lived in different places in my 20s and some of my 30s—I was so happy to move back to Naples and settle down. I love running into old friends and acquaintances at the grocery store. I love that my dentist is an old friend and former track teammate. I could go on and on!”



Shot on location at
Naples Yacht Club, Naples