

FOOD

New Fort Myers Water Taxi connects Pinchers, Nauti Parrot and more bars and restaurants



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Fort Myers News-Press

Published 12:00 p.m. ET April 19, 2022

Comedian Brian Corrión has told jokes for years onstage at Fort Myers and Naples comedy clubs. But the waters of Southwest Florida always called to him, he says, and he would usually spend his days captaining charter boats.

“I would captain by day and comic by night,” says Corrión, who goes by the nickname Captain Brian. “That’s what I called it.”

So when Corrión sold Fort Myers’ Laugh In Comedy Café about two years ago, he decided to put on his captain’s hat again and go into the boating business full-time.

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That started with his charter company On the Water Florida. But now Corrión has a second business bringing an all-new service to Fort Myers: A water taxi connecting several Fort Myers and North Fort Myers restaurants and bars along the Caloosahatchee River near downtown Fort Myers.

Other cities already have similar water taxis, including Naples Bay Water Shuttle, but Corrión says his water taxi is a first-of-its-kind offering for Fort Myers. He opened the business in February and plans to keep expanding it with more stops (including, he hopes, one in downtown Fort Myers by Luminary Hotel).

“As the city is growing, to be honest, I just wanted to be the first one on the water doing it,” Corrión says. “So as we grow as a community, I’m the first phone call they’re making, versus someone else trying to make something happen.”

Fort Myers Water Taxi offers people a laid-back new way to visit three stops along the Caloosahatchee River: Pinchers Crab Shack at The Marina at Edison Ford (where the boat starts and ends its route), Marintown Yacht Harbour (including Sea-Craft Waterfront Tiki and Nauti Parrot Tiki Hut) and the North Fort Myers Best Western hotel (including nearby Three Fishermen Seafood Restaurant).

Right now, there’s only one boat docked behind Pinchers next to Corrión’s smaller charter boat. But Corrión is open to expanding that to more boats if the fledgling business takes off.

“Everybody I’ve had, they just love it,” Corrión says, sitting on a stool on the boat’s deck as it bobs gently in the glistening water of the Caloosahatchee. “It’s just laid-back and fun.”

Corrión has already developed a core group of regulars in just two months, including people who live in nearby condos in Fort Myers and guests staying at the Best Western. His covered, 26-foot power boat can seat 24 people.

Rob Glessner of Estero tried out the boat with his girlfriend, and they’ve been back a few times since. They usually stop at several bars and restaurants for drinks and conversation.

“It’s super fun,” Glessner says.

An added bonus: One of those trips involved coming back as the sun set over Southwest Florida. “It was awesome,” Glessner says. “That was fantastic. So that really sold me on it.”

Sure, you could just get in your car and drive to those bars and restaurants. But that’s missing the point, says Robbi Waters of Fort Myers.

She’s ridden on the boat several times now, including with friends from out of town. People think “Southwest Florida,” and they usually think about boats and being on the water, she says. And the water taxi is a fun way to experience that — and cheap, too.

“The price is crazy good,” Waters says. “It’s 15 bucks, and the loop is an hour and 20 minutes around. But you can ride the boat as long as you want to. You can stay on and just keep going.

“To see the city from the waterfront, what an opportunity. ... It’s just a great experience.”

Corrion hopes to expand that experience soon. He’s been talking to the City of Fort Myers about adding a fourth taxi stop at a boat slip by Oxbow Bar & Grill in downtown Fort Myers.

That would open up his taxi service in a big way, giving people direct access to downtown and all its shops, bars and restaurants. Corrion hopes that stop could be operational within a month or two.

“The No. 1 question everybody asks is when’s that downtown stop coming,” he says. “It’s coming, just give it time.”

That downtown stop would take the taxi service to the next level, he says. “People from North Fort Myers could get off there, and it would eliminate issues of parking for people in downtown. ... It’s a win-win, all the way around.”

Fort Myers Water Taxi operates from noon to sunset, seven days a week (weather permitting). Each trip takes about 80 minutes.

There aren’t any reservations: It’s first come, first served.

Corrion pilots the boat — named More Appropriate — along with four part-time captains. And in case you’re wondering: Yes, he *does* tell jokes.

“When I’m driving, I do,” he says. “But they don’t know I’m going to.”

Corrion still performs at local comedy clubs, but he says he’s glad to be back to his other love: the water.

“The happy spots always been the water for me,” he says. “If you’re here in Florida, you gotta be on the water.”

Learn more about Fort Myers Water Taxi: Call 400-9179 or visit at ftmyerswatertaxi.com.

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