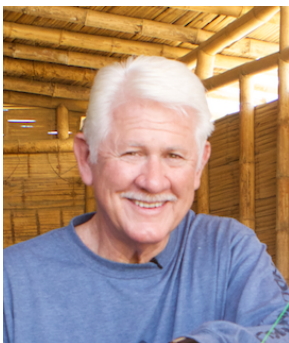


An interview with 'Miss Texas' captain, Norm Isaacs



"In the world of big game fishing he is the equivalent of a rock star – not some flash-in-the-pan rock star either, but a time-tested star like Dylan or Jagger", wrote Gaff magazine of Norm Isaacs. From New York Yankees baseball player to TV host of ESPN's *Big Game Fishing the World* for 16 consecutive seasons, Norm has always lived for adventure. Now he has moved to Peru, where he commands the legendary 'Miss Texas' fishing boat in the pursuit of the standing marlins that made Cabo Blanco a sport fishing hotspot.

How did you take such Gaff Magazine's compliment?

I'm flattered to be compared to people who have made themselves relevant in their chosen fields and have endured over time. I guess journalists have a bit of a flair for the dramatic. That comparison might be a little over the top!

You started your career playing baseball for the New York Yankees' minor leagues.

Playing for the Yankees was a great experience. I left the organization after a few years because they fired me. Back then I was pretty wild, and pro sports didn't put up with the craziness that they do now. Plus, I had an injury to my arm. The combination of injury was more than they wanted to deal with. It was a painful lesson, but most of the important ones are.

What did you do next?

My parents were in the aviation business when I was growing up. I could legally fly about the same time I could legally drive. It was natural for me to slide into the flying business after baseball, plus I loved flying. I instructed, took charters and ambulance trips and later flew for various corporations. I also started a fishing charter business on the days I wasn't in the air. In 1980 I moved to Kona, Hawaii where the fishing business won out and I let the flying business go.

How did you become the host of ESPN's 'Big Game Fishing the World'?

I was talked into making television shows on big game fishing by a lady that I was married to at the time who had some TV experience. I didn't want to be on camera so I was going to be the technical advisor. The guy we had as a host decided he needed more money than we could afford so I filled in until we found another host. After 20 years on the air we were still looking for that guy!

We started airing shows in Hawaii and in Florida and after about a year ESPN offered us a deal we couldn't turn down. At that time no one had ever done

complete series of shows targeting big game fish, specifically marlin. The show got excellent ratings so we just kept producing them. Doing the shows for ESPN facilitated my getting to fish and operating boats all over the world.

What has kept you shifting from one place – and profession – to another?

I changed locations and professions because that's the direction life took me. I'd like to say I was smart enough to plan it but that wasn't the case. My dad used to say "don't be afraid to give up your good to get your better". That has probably had something to do with many of my decisions over the years. Maybe I'm just not old enough yet but so far I have very few regrets.

What are your thoughts of Inkaterra's approach on ecotourism in Cabo Blanco?

In August of 2013 Joe Koechlin introduced me to a very interesting project that he was involved in in Cabo Blanco. The rich big game fishing history of Cabo Blanco by itself would have caught my interest, but I found much more than that. After becoming aware of Mr. Koechlin's plans, plus getting acquainted with the man and the Inkaterra operation I very much wanted to be involved.

I think it is one of those often sought and rarely found win-win things. After becoming familiar with some of their other projects and particularly with the Cabo Blanco area, I'm sure it will benefit big time in a number of ways.

Soon you will be moving to from your current home in Florida to Peru. What thrills does this bring you?

Actually, as of about two weeks ago I have already made the move. Settling in to the same old thing day after day has never tripped my trigger. I have always been a curious sort and always wondered about what is over the next hill. Granted its a big change in just about every area possible and not without a little frustration here and there but all things considered I'm loving it. I wish my Spanish would get better quicker but it's coming along.

You've gained the friendship of artisanal fishermen in Cabo Blanco. Have you learned some of their techniques?

Devoted fishermen worldwide seem to get along pretty well. Peru has been no exception. As far as learning their techniques – so far we have been very busy getting the Miss Texas operation up and running. I haven't had time to go out with any of the local guys yet, although they have offered a number of times. Local

knowledge and techniques are only taken lightly by someone who thinks he already knows it all. That isn't me. The more I learn, the more I know I don't know.

What have you found during your excursions in Cabo Blanco for the past months? Do you think it's still the sport fishing hotspot it was 60 years ago?

It's too early to tell at this point. All the indications are that there will be times when it will be very good. The bottom structure is still there and there is plenty of baitfish. There is no place where the fishing is red hot all year round and we haven't been here long enough, in different conditions to know what to expect. Time will tell but I'm very optimistic.

Are you getting comments from fellow anglers on Miss Texas and Cabo Blanco?

Yes, there is much interest from all over concerning Cabo Blanco. And you know, the Miss Texas is a functional floating museum.

What are your prospects on Cabo Blanco's Marine Reserve?

The marine reserve is desperately needed in Cabo Blanco. On a trip yesterday I ran across 4 long-lines of over a mile and a half each and within 15 miles of Cabo Blanco. These had all been deployed by non-Peruvian boats. I'm sure that is just the tip of the iceberg. The reserve would bring very important and necessary regulation into focus that would have huge positive effects on the health and sustainability of the fishery here in Cabo Blanco.

