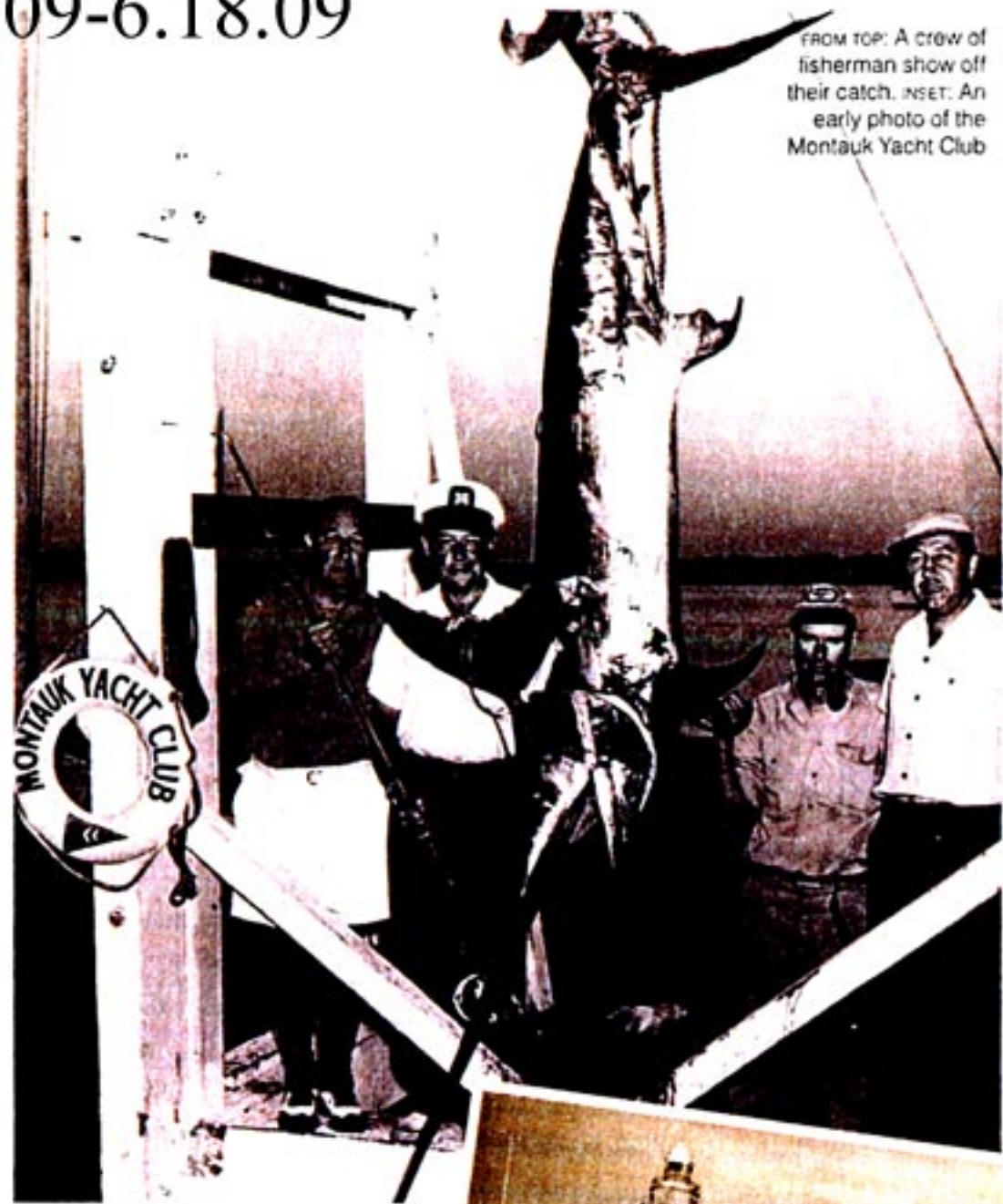


HAMPTONS

6.5.09-6.18.09

FROM TOP: A crew of fisherman show off their catch. INSET: An early photo of the Montauk Yacht Club



Welcome to the Club

On the eve of its 80th birthday, the Montauk Yacht Club succeeds in melding its past and present. BY MICHAEL BRAVERMAN

YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION to Montauk Yacht Club's 80th anniversary if you believe that Montauk is on the fringe of the known world. But, truthfully, the lovely surf town is not that far away, and it's definitely worth a celebratory trip. Besides, 80 years is an astounding feat in an area where we see all sorts of establishments come and go—often in the space of a single season.

Montauk Yacht Club's story begins with Carl Fisher, a lifestyle destination entrepreneur of the first order: He converted Miami Beach from a swampy barrier island into a major resort. Somewhat less successfully, he brought his big vision to Long Island and started a number of enterprises in the late 1920s with the intention of making Montauk a Tudor-themed international playground.

His plans were battered by the whirlwinds of the 20th century, but the Montauk Yacht Club somehow survived a market crash (until recently known as *the* market crash), Prohibition, the Great Depression and a world war. The Club's scaled replica of the Montauk Lighthouse—a typically extravagant Fisher idea—and its Tudor roofs are still there, now modestly peeking out from all the later changes and additions.

Vanderbilts, Astors, Fords and Doubledays were among the early visitors, but a couple of generations later the clientele—and the world, for that matter—is decidedly less aristocratic, and the hotel and resort facilities, which have had their ups and downs over the years, have undergone a major renovation to attract today's big money and bold-faced names.

Today, MYC (as it's often called by insiders) is part of IGY, which to outsiders is Island Global Yachting, an international organization that

owns and manages marinas—or as they say in corporate speak, "yachting lifestyle destinations."

You can go to the IGY website and reserve a slip for a specified time at a number of Caribbean Islands or in the Arabian Gulf, Mexico, Croatia and, of course, Montauk, as routinely as you would reserve a hotel room on the Marriott or Four Seasons website.

The marina facilities are still among the best in the area, and during the summer the slips are consistently populated with breathtaking yachts. With the new renovations, the restaurants, bars, public spaces and 107 guest rooms, villas and suites are spiffier and more stylish than they've been in decades, but the Club's history is still reflected in a terrific collection of archival photographs hanging on the walls of the main floor of the lighthouse area, now called the Turtle Lounge. Mostly from the 1940s to the 1960s, the images record the fishing tournaments and boating activities of people like Captain Frank Mundus, the shark hunter who inspired *Jaws*.

The Hamptons, unlike Palm Beach, Aspen, Santa Barbara or other fashionable places, has never been known for luxury hotels. It's more of a residential resort, where people go to their own homes, rentals or small inns. That perception will not change overnight, but the MYC is clearly offering the alternative in this small but historic haven. H

