

I don't really remember when I met Zach Rowell, but I've always liked him. He was a little fella when he first started coming fishing with his Dad JT many years ago. Zach always has had "it" when it came to fishing. Casting, jigging, reading water and seeing bait was always second nature to him, even at an early age.

Five or so years ago, Zach called from his home in Brandon, MS. He was in his late teens, and wanted to get into guiding and fishing for a living. Like any teenager that calls me wanting to "live the dream" I always try to talk all of them out of it. I always try to talk them into getting a degree, or some type of trade, or certification(welding, outboard mechanic, instrumentation, etc). Fishing for a living will always be an option, but if you get hurt, or realize the "dream job" is a bit of nightmare, you always wanna have something to fall back on. Especially if their plans involve getting married and having kids.

Despite my best efforts, Zach went all in, and started fishing for a living. He got hired with a childhood friend of mine, Capt Brian Gagnon with Southern Magnolia Fishing Charters. It was a relief to know Zach was gonna be with Brian. He was basically living at Chandeleur Island, on a mothership. He was gonna have to work hard, but I knew Brian would definitely keep An eye on him. It's very tough work out there, for weeks at a time, but Zach did it with no complaints. He even studied, and got his 100 ton masters license during his downtime.

I got a text from Capt Zach last year, and he said he was heading to Kodiak Alaska! He was hired to work with Fish n Chips charters. I actually looked them up, and they have stellar reviews FYI. He did a season up there, fishing for Salmon, Halibut, Ling Cod and Rock fish. When I say worked, I think he told me he only had a day or two off in several months.

I got to fish with Zach a few weeks back, and it was a long overdue treat. Hearing all the stories of what he's seen and done the last couple Years was fascinating. Probably the biggest surprise, was getting to meet his beautiful bride Taylor. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing the plans he and his lovely wife have for the coming years. Taylor is finishing up a nursing degree, and very supportive of Zach's career.

He's come a long ways since that first trip many years ago. Zach has become a Captain, a guide, a Husband and really just a good man. It'll be interesting to see what the future holds for this young man. I have zero doubts, if he wants it, he'll get it.

Here's to my friend and colleague, Capt Zach Rowell. Keep doing great things!

By Capt. Sonny Schindler

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