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Virgin Islands

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stilt-walking
Moko Jumbies

Growing up
on St. John

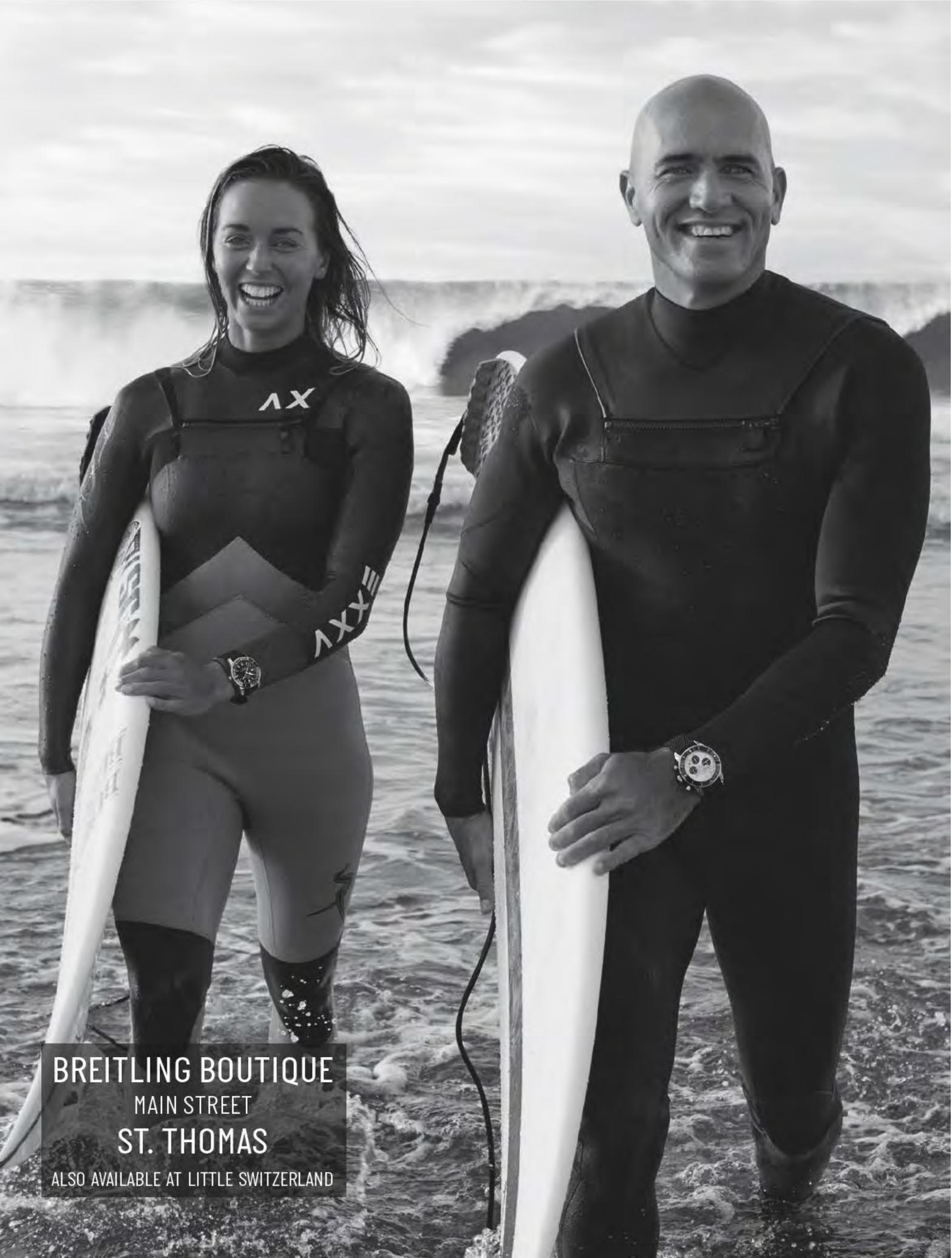
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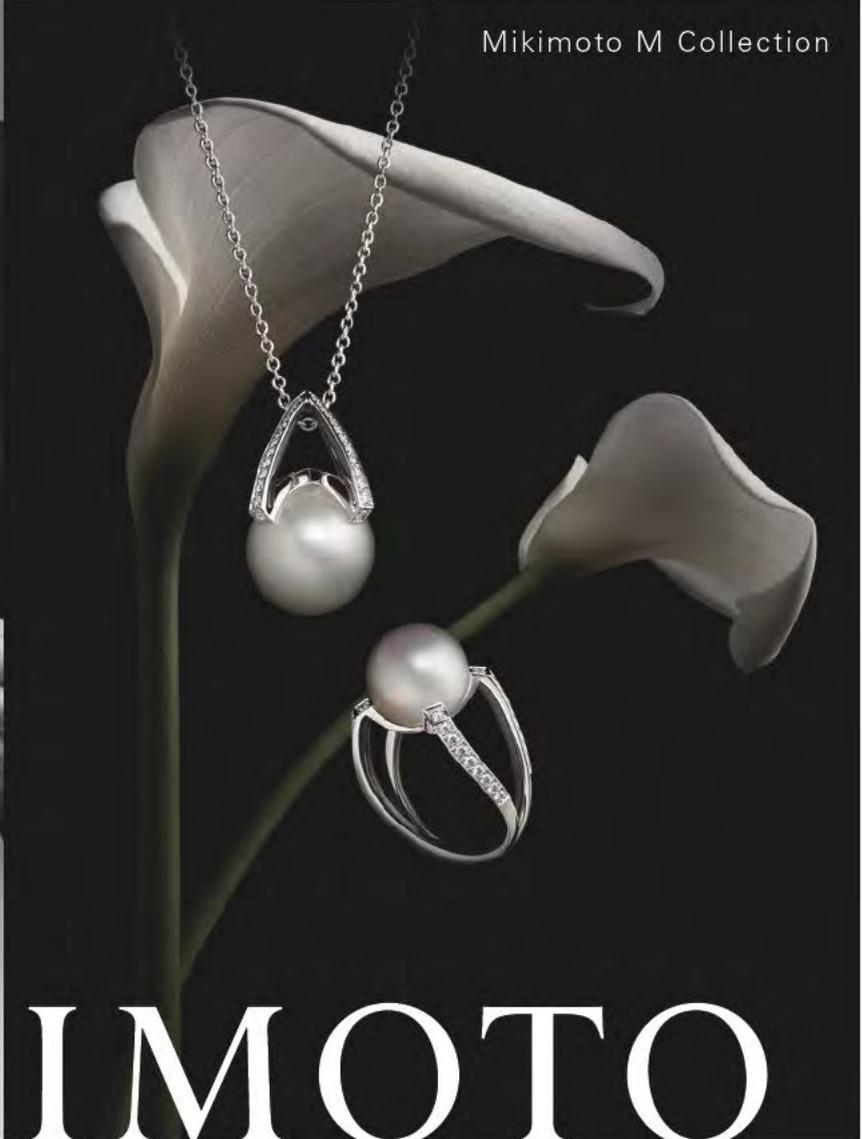
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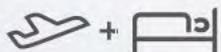

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welcome



Welcome to the Virgin Islands! You're on your way to one of the most beautiful, diverse, culturally rich destinations in the world. There's nothing like watching your plane descend closer and closer toward the sea until suddenly, the wheels touch down on a runway you didn't even realize was there. And when the plane door opens and that punch of tropical air envelops you as you're greeted by friendly faces offering up complimentary shots of Cruzan rum, you'll know then that you are home.

After being a regular contributor to Destination U.S. Virgin Islands | British Virgin Islands for many years, I am thrilled to have been chosen as the magazine's editor. I'm very familiar with the Destination brand, as I have worked as editor for Destination Bermuda since that magazine was relaunched in 2016, but the Virgin Islands has been my home since 2005, and the territory is obviously near and dear to my heart. I offer gracious thanks to Cathy O'Gara for her dedication to the magazine during her years-long stint as editor and for the guidance she's provided as I put together this issue.

I first fell in love with the Caribbean for what it has to offer beyond the beaches—the people, the culture, the music, the food, the linguistic styles and almost musical accents, and of course Carnival. This is what I hope to bring to you in the pages of Destination magazine.

By all means, please enjoy the beaches. I have no doubt that the V.I.'s pristine white sands and dreamy cerulean seas are high on the list of reasons you're here. Laze in the shade of a sea grape tree, snorkel with turtles, try out a new activity like paddle boarding or snuba. Remember to take only pictures and leave only footprints, helping to keep the islands' beaches a place of beauty and wonder for generations to come.

But I implore you to also look deeper. Get to know some of the islands' generational residents. Seek out a steel pan performance. Don't be afraid to sample some of the local dishes. Stew goat is a wonderfully warm and rich dish that'll have you redefining your idea of comfort food.

The Virgin Islands' natural beauty is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to what makes these islands so special. Discover it all for yourself.

Andrea Milam,
Editor



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Contributors

Destination/USVI is the go to magazine and guide for Virgin Islands visitors and business travelers as well as seasonal and full time residents. Destination/USVI gives great suggestions on where to eat, drink, and be merry, enjoy wonderful activities, sports, and attractions as well as the best ways to relax.

To get all this information in one place takes a huge effort by the whole team.

Here's a "big up" to the people behind the scenes.

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Destination/USVI is published by Ralston Holding Company Limited, registered office, Town Centre, P.O. Box 257, Leeward Highway, Providenciales, Turks & Caicos Islands, British West Indies and managed by Ralston Holding Company Limited

International Advertising Enquiries to Ralston Holding Company Limited ralstonpub@aol.com

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Editor: Andrea Milam, St. John, V.I., www.andreamilam.com

Production management, design and layout:
Real World Creative Design
0044 1202 849000 mail@realworldad.co.uk

Cover photo: Don Hebert info@donhebert.com

Distribution: Debi Cashen 340 690 0343

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The Publisher would like to thank all photo contributors.

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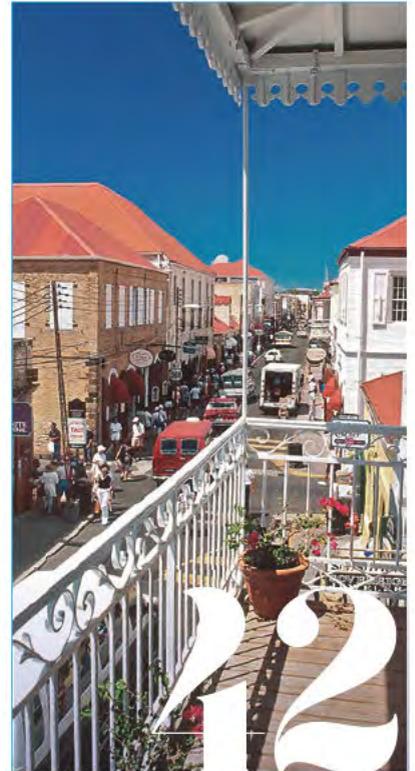
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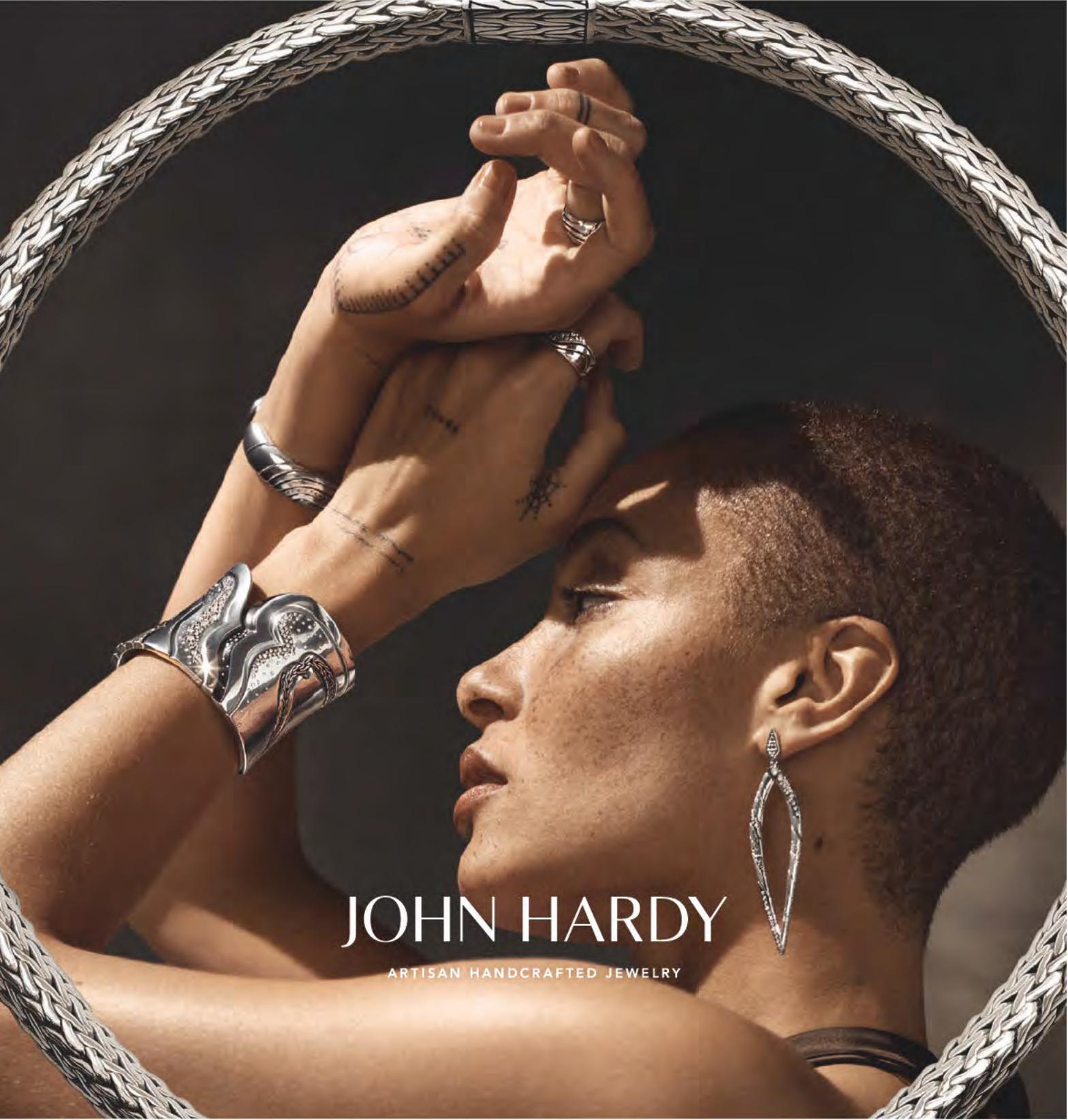
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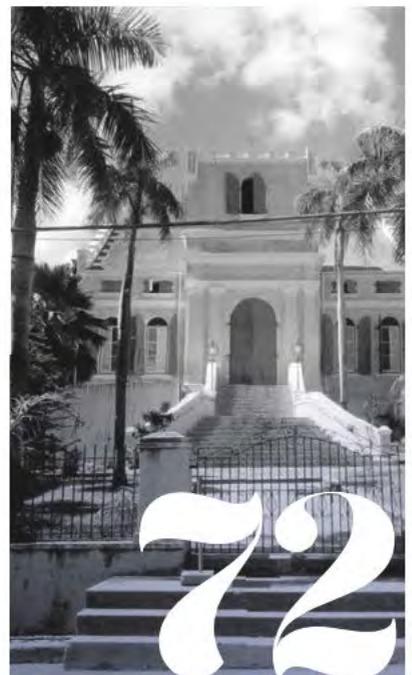
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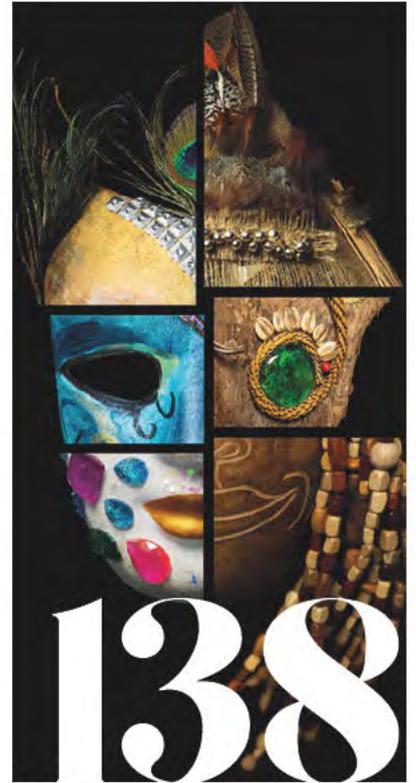
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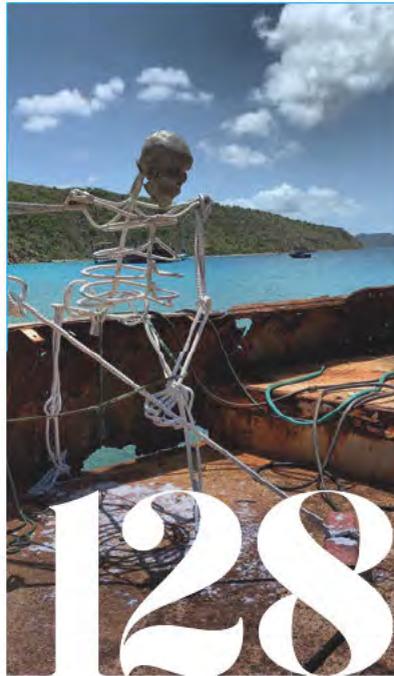
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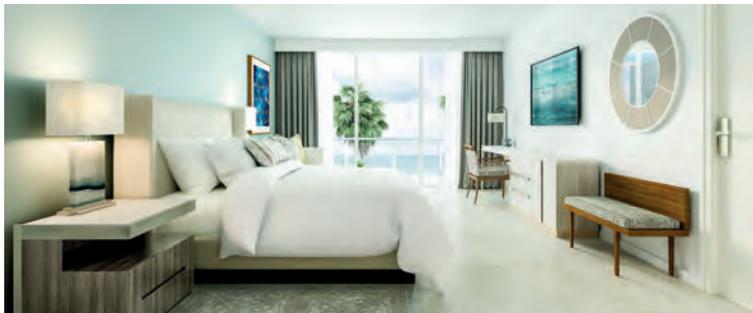
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island essentials

Useful information for an enjoyable stay

The melting pot of the Caribbean

Numerous factors have influenced the Virgin Islands' culture over many hundreds of years. In addition to descendants of Danish colonists and the Africans who were once enslaved here, you'll meet people from other Caribbean islands. St. Thomas' Frenchies are descended from settlers on St. Barths in the French West Indies who migrated to St. Thomas in the mid-19th century. There are large Hispanic communities made up largely of people from the Dominican Republic, and plenty of Haitians have migrated to the V.I. as well. East Indians and Middle Easterners maintain a strong cultural identity. There are long-locked Rastafarians and because the V.I. is a U.S. territory, you'll find plenty of continental Americans. Many native Virgin Islanders can trace their roots to Ghana, where the Danes also had a colony.

Money, banking, and stamps

You'll find ATM machines at banks, many hotels, and various other locations on all three islands. The U.S. Virgin Islands has branches of several national and international banks. If you would like to mail something home, the U.S. Postal Service is reliable and offers reasonably priced options. If you are headed to the British Virgin Islands, you'll be pleasantly surprised to learn that the legal tender is also U.S. currency. Philatelists will be interested to learn that the BVI is the only British possession where a postage stamp's cost is printed in USD.

Duty free

The V.I.'s special duty free status, unique customs advantages, and high volume all come together to create a true shopper's paradise. Each U.S. visitor can take up to \$1,600 worth of duty-free imports into the U.S. every 30 days. That's double the \$800 allowed for other Caribbean countries, and most international destinations have a limit of \$400. Your family can make a joint declaration for an expensive item. Liquor is a bargain too. Take home a four-pack of alcohol and add a fifth bottle if it's Cruzan Rum or Captain Morgan, both made in the V.I. Don't choose 151 proof liquors as they are highly flammable and are not allowed on aircraft. Tobacco products are well priced too; you're allowed 100 cigars or five cartons of cigarettes per person.

Taxes

Virgin Islanders pay the same national U.S. rate on form 1040, but the proceeds stay in the territory. The federal government matches some taxes like the rum excise tax, so buying Cruzan Rum and Captain Morgan—made locally in the V.I.—when you're at home is a great way to support your favorite vacation destination. The Virgin Islands is a great place to invest, too, with wonderful incentives from the Economic Development Agency.

Who's in charge?

The USVI is a territory of the United States with an elected government. Virgin Islanders are American citizens represented by an elected non-voting delegate to Congress. The islands are treated as states in most U.S. federal programs, with a major exception: residents of America's territories and possessions are denied the privilege of voting for President.

No sales tax

Another advantage for visitors and residents is that the U.S. Virgin Islands has no sales tax. That extends to restaurants, activities, and attractions as well as retail sales. These savings combined with duty free advantages can make prices as much as 30 percent less than stateside.

Take only pictures

You are not allowed to leave the islands with coral, seashells, sand, plants, or other native species. The V.I. Code prohibits exporting indigenous species and the U.S. Department of Agriculture doesn't want any unwelcome visitors to the mainland. The only exceptions are commercially caught legal size conch and whelk shells. After you clear Customs at the airport, an agricultural specialist who also works for U.S. Customs & Border Protection will ask you to declare any flora and fauna.

The walk of woe

All good things must come to an end, even your unforgettable Virgin Islands vacation. It's always a good idea to plan to get to the airport at least two or even three hours before your flight. There are several kiosks inside the terminal for last-minute shopping, and the airport's restaurant is a great place to get one last home-cooked West Indian meal before you head home. Connect with your carrier:
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Island hopping

Traveling between St. Thomas and St. John is easy, and both islands are deserving of at least a full day of exploration. Passenger ferries travel between Red Hook and Cruz Bay every hour on the hour. There's also a ferry that travels less frequently between Cruz Bay and Crown Bay, which is convenient on departure days for those vacationing on St. John, as Crown Bay is just a five-minute taxi ride from the airport. Barges—those are car ferries for the uninitiated—also travel regularly between St. Thomas and St. John. Be sure to get the okay from your rental car company before bringing your vehicle off-island.

St. Croix is about 40 miles south of St. Thomas and St. John, and though traveling to that island requires a bit more research and planning, it's also well worth a visit. The QE IV ferry departs St. Croix at 8 a.m. and St. Thomas at 3 p.m. daily except for Wednesdays. The ride is about two and a half hours long, and if you're prone to motion sickness, come prepared with the remedy of your choice. It can be a bumpy ride. A more thrilling St. Croix travel option is the sea plane, which takes off from Charlotte Amalie and lands in Christiansted harbor, or you can fly on a Cessna so small you might even get to sit next to the pilot from St. Thomas's Cyril E. King Airport to St. Croix's Henry E. Rohlsen Airport. Either flight option will have you to St. Croix in about 20 minutes.

The British Virgin Islands is also easily accessible, though note that you'll need your passport. Ferries travel regularly between St. Thomas and Tortola; from Tortola, you can hop ferries to Virgin Gorda, Jost Van Dyke, and Anegada.

What's a gade?

It's an intriguing word that you'll see after the islands' old Danish street names, and it means "street." Locally, it's pronounced "gadda" and many streets, like St. Thomas's Dronningens Gade (Queen Street) and St. John's Kongens Gade (King Street), bear the same names they were given during the Danish colonial era.

Hail a cab

Taking a taxi eliminates the need to find parking, which can be especially challenging on St. John, and it's the best choice if you're planning to imbibe while out and about. Taxi fares are fixed at a per person, per destination rate and the information is widely available, so be sure to inform yourself before calling for a ride. There's no Uber here, but one savvy young businessman has created an app, CariCab, which connects you with licensed taxi drivers, gives you a fare estimation before you request your ride, and allows for a seamless credit card transaction. The app is available in the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Public buses run regularly and many hotels have stops in front of their main entrance, and on St. Thomas the dollar safaris run a set route with passengers hopping on and off as needed. At \$1-\$2 per person per ride, this is the most economical way to get around St. Thomas. On St. John, hitchhiking is still a safe, common, and widely accepted mode of transportation. Stand on the side of the road with your index finger pointing in the direction you wish to go, and be sure to greet the kind person who picks you up with a "good morning," "good afternoon," or "good night."

Island worship

With a trio of islands named for saints, it's not surprising that the Virgin Islands is a deeply religious community. Whatever your creed, you will find a warm welcome at island houses of worship. Dozens of denominations are represented at hundreds of churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples on St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John, and in the BVI. Do a little online research or ask your hotel concierge for a recommendation. You will be doubly blessed if you leave a nice donation.

Danish delight

Denmark ruled the Virgin Islands for almost 300 years and they still love their former colony. Young Danes often come to the islands on research and vocational projects and many stay to make their home. Organizations like the Danish West Indian Society and Friends of Denmark help maintain the territory's ties to Denmark.

Velkommen hjem, danske gæster. Vi er meget glade for, at I har valgt at rejse til vores smukke øer. Når I besøger St. Croix, St. Thomas og St. John, vil I opdage, at Jeres danske historie også er vores historie. Hvis I søger efter Jeres families rødder, ønsker vi Jer held og lykke. Vi håber at I vil nyde den afslappede tempo her, og give Jer gode tid til at opleve både naturen og kulturen. I har rejst langt for at komme hertil, og vi vil gøre alt, hvad vi kan, for at gøre Jeres ophold så velykket som muligt. Husk at komme tilbage igen snart.

Shoulder to shoulder

Remember to drive left/look right. In the Virgin Islands, driving is on the left, as is the steering wheel. Pedestrians should take care to note that traffic is coming from the opposite direction, so look carefully in both directions before crossing the street. Always buckle up and don't use your cell phone while driving—it's against the law in the Virgin Islands.



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 Tudor Watches
 Luryx Duty-Free*
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 Lladro Boutique
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 Belgian Chocolate Factory
 VI Ice Cream Co.



*perfume, cosmetics, skincare, liquor and tobacco

AH Riise Mall is located in Downtown Charlotte Amalie
 St Thomas, Virgin Islands | 340-777-2222 | www.ahriise.com | [f](https://www.facebook.com/AHRiiseMall) AHRiiseMall



Perfect island sandals

Step out St. Thomas-style with classic island footwear from **Zora of St. Thomas**, custom sandalmaker since 1962. These quality leather sandals are handcrafted and custom-fitted for maximum comfort and wearability. There's a wide array of colors and styles for men and women, and you can opt for casual flat or add a wedge of up to three inches. Arches, metatarsals, and ortho cushions can also be incorporated into your design. Choose a close-toed "limin' shoe" or show off with a sandal decorated with leather flowers.



Be sure to stop by at the beginning of your stay. Custom-made sandals will require two visits for the perfect fit. If your time is short, semi-custom sandals are available in one visit.

There's more than just sandals at Zora of St. Thomas. Accessorize with lovely earrings, pendants, and bracelets made artfully by Timisa. This line of sterling silver and gold jewelry is made by hand from a variety of semi-precious stones (opal, pearl, tourmaline, and others). Also available are canvas totes, travel bags, backpacks, briefcases, and fish, turtle, bird, and cat bags in a rainbow of colors.

These durable and fun bags are all made upstairs at Zora's. Also be sure to check out the **Art Gallery and Emporium at Zora of St. Thomas**, featuring local artists working in oil, clay, acrylic, and pencil. The newly created emporium has a beautiful line of hand-blockprinted bedding, tablecloths, sarongs, scarves, and clothing. Zora has also brought in a new collection of fine rugs and dhurries made from wool and cotton. Zora's Art Gallery and Emporium has something for everyone's taste and budget.

Zora of St. Thomas is a quick walk from the Main Street Post Office. Look for the historic yellow building, across from Roosevelt Park.

340-774-2559
www.zoracustomsandals.com



Pottery by Jessica Rosenberg available at Zora's Art Gallery

"Back Street" by Shansi Miller



island

Caribbean colloquialisms

To the untrained ear, the dialects of most English-speaking Caribbean islands likely sound the same. You might be surprised to learn that the common utterance of "Yeah, mon," often attributed to the region as a whole, is Jamaican in origin and is not typically used by Virgin Islanders. One phrase you are likely to hear in the V.I.: "mehson," in which the speaker is not referring to their son, but expressing surprise. "The mosquitoes are biting, mehson!"

Good morning

When a Virgin Islander says "good night" to you, they are not telling you it's bedtime. In fact, "good night" is a polite greeting, along with "good morning" and "good afternoon." Use the appropriate greeting based on the time of day to show respect for local customs. This greeting is sure to elicit a much friendlier response than your typical "hello" or "hi."

Tipping

Tip as you would in a major U.S. city—a minimum of 15 percent. There's no tax on your meal and the cost of living in the Virgin Islands is very high, so why not be generous? For parties of six or more, many restaurants will automatically add a tip, so check your bill to see if it's included.

No shirt, no shoes, no problem?

While your bathing suit is passable attire at some beach bars, when your toes leave the sand, it's time to cover up. Shoes are a necessity for everyone; men and boys should wear a shirt, and women and girls should wear a cover-up when not at the beach. Beach nudity is always prohibited.

Tech talk

4G service on the islands is generally reliable and lots of public places have Wi-Fi. As you tour the islands, use your phone's navigation system to find the spots on your must-do list. Map apps function rather well in the V.I.

essentials

Climate change

With all-year temperatures that range in the 80s and the gentle whisper of the trade winds, the V.I.'s climate is perfect most of the year. August through October can be humid and in the winter months you can expect a 15-minute sun-shower around midday. If a serious downpour dampens your stay, do like the locals do and have a leisurely lunch under an awning while watching the weather go by, or catch a first run flick at Market Square East.

Rum protection factor

Rum and the Caribbean go hand in hand, but if you're avoiding alcohol and need a little help, check out local Friends of Bill W. groups at www.aavirginislands.org. Those who do choose to imbibe should be aware of the "island pour." Cocktails here typically come with a generous helping of your chosen liquor, so pace yourself and enjoy responsibly.

Sun protection factor

The sun can ruin your vacation quicker than too much rum. Choose an ocean safe sunscreen to help protect coral reefs. Be sure to read the label and verify that oxybenzone, octinoxate, and octocrylene are not listed as ingredients. Wear a high number SPF or plenty of protective clothing; the sun that feels so glorious warming your skin can quickly render you miserable.

Log on

For the most up to date visitor information, check Virgin Islands sites like the USVI Department of Tourism's website, www.usvitourism.vi. Another favorite is www.vinow.com. Check what's happening in the BVI at www.bviwelcome.com. And of course www.destination-magazines.com/us-virgin-islands will provide you with more interesting articles and information and things to do, see, and try.

SOS

Should you require police, fire, or EMS assistance, call 911 from a landline or 340-776-9110 from your cell phone and be sure to first identify which island you're on. Ask your hotel management or villa rental agent to act as your advocate if you need a friend.

Smoking

Thanks to the V.I. Smoke-Free Act, smoking is prohibited in virtually all public areas including restaurants, bars, casinos, beaches, and parks. If you do smoke in designated areas, please dispose of your butts properly. Cannabis is decriminalized; possession of less than an ounce can result in confiscation and a fine of \$100-\$200. Medicinal marijuana was legalized in 2019, though implementation of this policy was still being worked out at the time of this magazine's printing. For the time being, it's best to skip the pot in favor of the natural high that comes with being on vacation in such a stunningly beautiful destination.

Telephone etiquette

Don't be surprised if you experience the occasional dropped call due to the islands' mountainous terrain. Check your carrier's roaming rates as you're likely to pick up a BVI signal from St. John without warning, which can become very costly very quickly. Many cell phone carriers have travel packages that offer discounted roaming rates, or you might want to turn off the roaming option on your phone altogether.

Safety first

The Virgin Islands is safer than many other same-size U.S. vacation destinations. As you would at home, use your good judgment and steer clear of empty streets, back alleys, shortcuts, and deserted beaches, especially after dark. Don't flash your bling. Leave your rental car unlocked with no valuables inside and avoid confrontations.

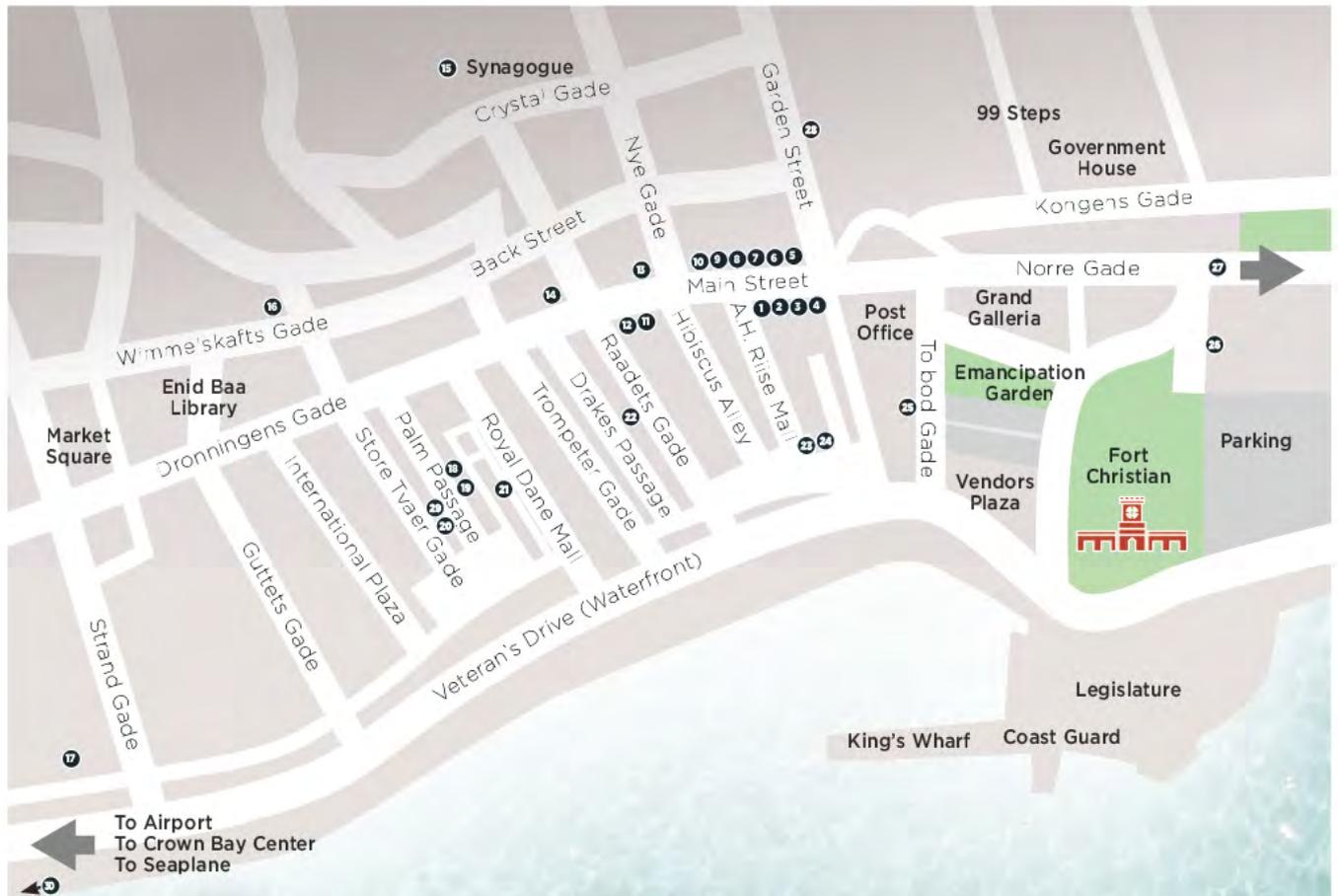


Take a Walk up Synagogue Hill

Your visit is not complete without seeing St. Thomas Synagogue, the oldest in continuous use under the American flag. One of the three National Historic Landmarks on the island, the synagogue is just a short walk from Main Street's shopping district, at the intersection of Crystal Gade and Raadets Gade. The Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas has been a fully functioning synagogue congregation since 1796 and welcomes visitors for worship and life-cycle events. Plan your destination wedding, vow renewal, or Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the Synagogue's helpful staff.

This architectural gem still has all the original elements from its construction in 1833. The pews were fashioned by shipbuilders from local mahogany. The ark is crowned with the stone tablets that are the cornerstones of the Jewish faith and the American legal system. The domed ceiling soars above sand floors and Baccarat crystal candelabra. Visit the adjacent Weibel Museum to learn about this historic St. Thomas community. The Judaica Shop features handmade Jewish art and souvenirs. Worship service begins on Friday evenings at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome.

The Hebrew Congregation
of St. Thomas
2116 Crystal Gade, St. Thomas
340-774-4312
info@synagogue.vi



Discover the treasures of Charlotte Amalie

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- Royal Caribbean
- Southland Gaming
- Tickles Dockside Pub



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One of the fabulous things about shopping in St. Thomas is the incredible variety of merchandise that can be found on what is sometimes referred to as the Miracle Mile. In fact, the active part of the island's Main Street shopping area is barely a quarter mile long. Along the alleys and side streets, shops large and small offer a well priced assortment of exclusive, opulent, amazing merchandise.

Shopping in St. Thomas



Although many of the large shops on Main Street and at the cruise ship docks have branches around the Caribbean and the world, this island is their home base. For one or two of Main Street's notable shops, St. Thomas is their only location. And they are all in competition to bring you, the customer, one of the most varied arrays of high-end merchandise available anywhere. Nowhere else will you find luxury items at such excellent value.

Jewelry makes up a large portion of Main Street offerings. All of the top brands and watch lines are represented. Many stores focus on a featured product, whether pearls or

colored diamonds, giving buyers the opportunity to select from a wide assortment. St. Thomas merchants are friendly competitors, willing to direct you to a shop that will please if you're on the hunt for a particular item or style. To further sweeten your shopping experience, bargaining is accepted. Don't be afraid to ask and you will likely end up with a better price than you hoped for.

Seek out special treasures in the smaller shops. You're sure to find a store whose buyer shares your sense of style. St. Thomas shoppers come back year after year to the same store, often to the same salesperson, for special purchases.





St. Thomas is the place to find elegant accessories, whether it's a fine writing instrument, designer sunglasses, evening bags, or leather goods. There are figurines and objets d'art from Lalique to Hummel to Lladro and you'll find a great selection of crystal, silver, fine china, casual wear, and swimsuits. When it comes to electronics and cameras, you'll find brand names at the best prices. Don't forget to look for local and hand produced items, which make great souvenirs.

Shoppers find themselves wanting to come back to St. Thomas over and over again. Even if you're not a shopper, just browsing through the shops is an awesome experience. And everything is duty free, a savings you'll see on the price tag. Maybe even more impressive—there is no sales tax. That's a savings you'll see on your bottom line, and a key point of information to remember as you work your way through your wish list.



Shopping

Ballerina Jewelers

5176 & 5180 Dronningens Gade
340-776-3701
Toll Free: 1-800-722-4455
www.ballerina-jewelers.com
ballerinajewelers@gmail.com

*Simon G. His and Hers rings
available at Ballerina Jewelers*



*Yellow diamond jewelry
available at Ballerina Jewelers*



At Ballerina Jewelers, every experience is a magical one, and the friendship of those they serve is the foundation of the business's progress.

Ballerina Jewelers is an established family-owned and operated business, one of the most trusted and respected jewelers in the Caribbean, committed to providing their clients a unique, personalized shopping experience while building lifelong relationships for the past three decades.

Ballerina Jewelers stands as an unrivaled source for certified loose diamonds in all shapes and sizes which can be set in their unique handcrafted mountings along with colored diamonds and a vibrant range of gemstones. It is considered one of the most reputable retailers for carrying avant-garde Swiss timepieces and extravagant jewelry brands.

Ballerina brings you the latest styles that are their own unique designs as well as from famous designer brands. Treat yourself to stunning and intricate jewelry by Tacori and Simon G., discover the fine 18K Italian jewelry from Fope, a royalty favorite; explore your energy of creation with Pandora, and admire the enamel jewelry by Belle Etoile, Hidalgo, Soho, and Lauren G Adams.

Watch connoisseurs, allow yourself to be taught by highly trained and informed watch enthusiasts, through vendor-sponsored trainings, and publications which take pride in Swiss timepieces such as Bell & Ross, Frédérique Constant, Hermés, U-Boat, Mido, TechnoMarine, Oris, Luminox, Fendi, Seiko, Skagen, Citizen, Guess, and many more. They also have a great selection of pre-owned Swiss watches.

*White and colored diamond rings
available at Ballerina Jewelers*



Looking for beautiful collectible pieces? Stop by to check out Ballerina's Lladro Figurine Collection.

These exclusive and distinctive designs provide incredible value at duty free prices beyond compare.

Boasting seven highly flourishing locations across the Caribbean, Ballerina Jewelers has maintained an outstanding reputation for quality, service, and value for the past three decades, attested to by their thousands of repeat clientele. All purchases are guaranteed and come with certified appraisals along with U.S. service centers.

Spoil yourself with the finest jewelry by the finest jewelers in the Caribbean, only at Ballerina Jewelers. Value, trust, and peace of mind are treasured in business today. Ballerina Jewelers will ensure that they will continue to deliver those in their relationships. They aim to please. At Ballerina Jewelers, every experience is an unforgettable one.

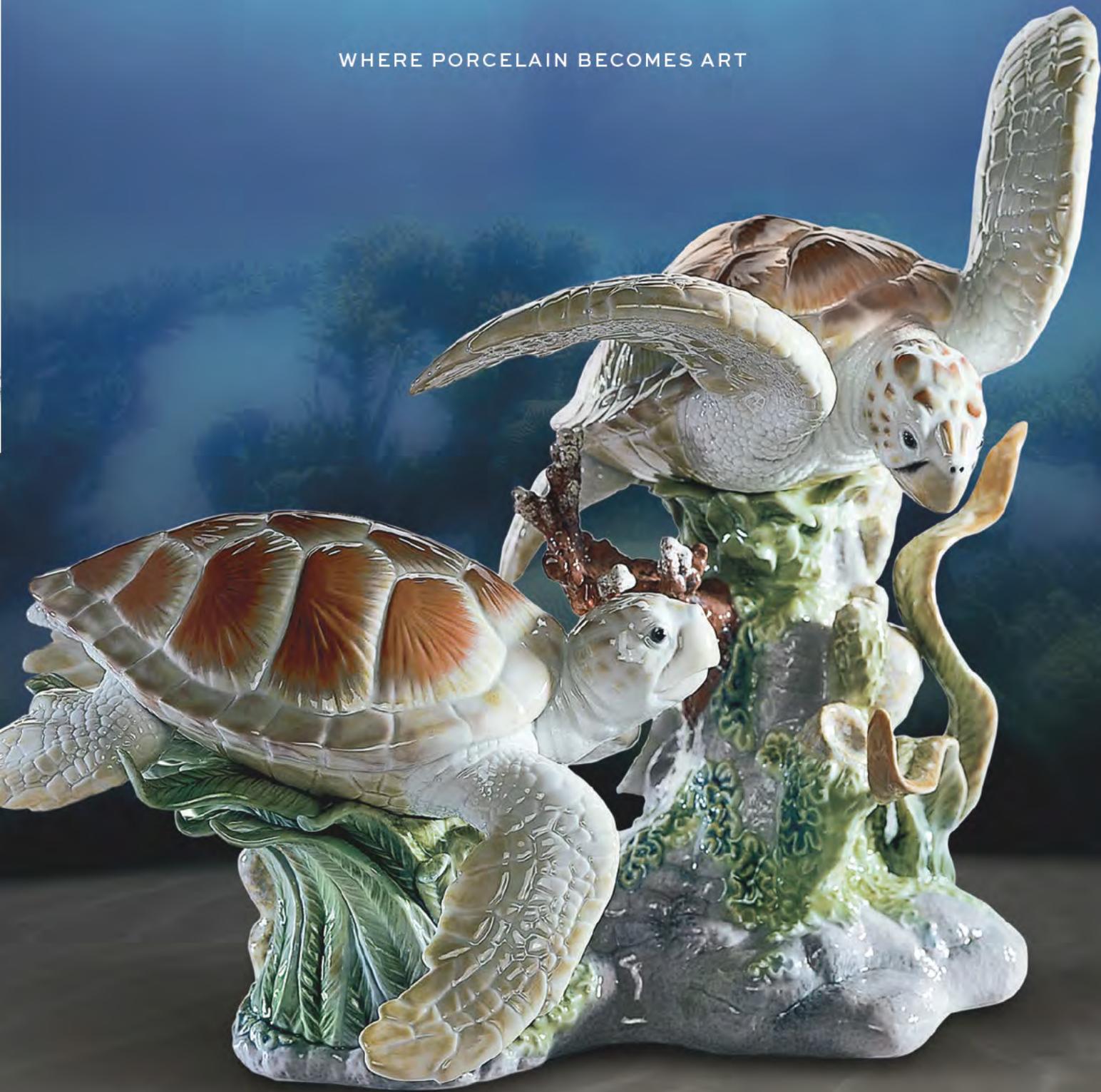


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LLADRÓ

HANDMADE PORCELAIN
Spain

Shopping

Diamonds International

Main Street
A.H. Riise Mall
Havensight Mall
Crown Bay Center
340-776-5570
www.diamondsinternational.com

The premier jewelry retailer in the Caribbean, Diamonds International, has been offering top-notch diamond jewelry for a quarter century with an extensive array of loose stones, designer brands, and one-of-a-kind settings. Lauded for their excellent customer service and expertise, the friendly sales staff will help you select that perfect piece of jewelry to bring home from the Caribbean.



Hublot Big Bang Sang Bleu King Gold Pavé



Safi Kilima Tanzanite Ring

Tanzanite International
Tanzanite International, the Caribbean's premiere tanzanite retailer, has been raising the bar of excellence in luxury goods for more than 25 years. Featuring exclusive luxury tanzanite brands only available at Tanzanite International, they also offer a wide array of loose tanzanite, designer jewelry, and couture settings. Discover why they are known for their excellent customer service and knowledgeable, friendly sales staff. Find the piece you've always dreamed about at Tanzanite International.

Hublot Boutique
Main Street
Founded in Switzerland in 1980, Hublot is renowned for its "Art of Fusion" concept which means the combination of exotic materials and Swiss watchmaking tradition. Hublot's philosophy is to "Be First, Different and Unique." the Swiss watchmaker is consistently ahead of the curve, through its innovations in materials and the creation of manufacture movements. Hublot is fully committed to creating a Haute Horlogerie brand with a visionary future.

Diamonds International Watch & Design
Diamonds International Watch & Design leads the Caribbean in bringing the latest and most coveted timepieces to the region for over 25 years. Top world-class watch brands are all conveniently displayed under one roof, so you can compare and contrast each one, and find the perfect watch for you at unrivaled Duty Free values.



Crown Of Light Couture Ring

Philip Stein Boutique
Main Street
Founded in 2003, the Philip Stein Company has brought an innovative outlook to the world of luxury products. By integrating Natural Frequency Technology in 2008 in the company's extensive collection of watches and bracelets, Philip Stein has successfully combined the principles of overall wellbeing with a distinctive design.

Bvlgari Boutique
Since 1884, Bvlgari has exemplified Italian excellence. Built upon 2,700 years of Roman history, Bvlgari honors its rich past, finding in Rome an endless source of inspiration for its modern and contemporary designs. A jeweler to the stars, Bvlgari continuously introduces innovations rewriting the rules of the jewelry universe, and launching new trends that stand as icons of contemporary design. Renowned for stylistic audacity and bold colors, a Bvlgari piece is immediately recognizable. Discover the Maison's jewelry and timepiece collections of Italian excellence, unrivaled design, and exuberant craftsmanship at Diamonds International Watch and Design on Main Street St Thomas.



Bvlgari Serpenti Watch
Twisting time with endless creativity, the Serpenti watch with red dial and strap can infinitely change its skin, for contemporary expressions of seduction. Serpenti watch with 18 kt rose gold case set with brilliant cut diamonds, red lacquered dial, and interchangeable double spiral bracelet in red karung leather.



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340-776-4110
www.royalcaribbeanvi.com

In 1969, Royal Caribbean opened its doors for business to welcome its new customers. With their continued commitment to quality, elegance, beauty, and innovation, the company has grown to be an industry leader in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Now in 2020, Royal Caribbean continues to serve their patrons with the highest level of customer service and have established a satisfied and loyal customer base throughout the world.

Discover the best shopping St. Thomas has to offer

Royal Caribbean is the authorized dealer for many world-renowned luxury watch brands and fine jewelry. Royal Caribbean offers an extensive collection of fine handcrafted timepieces from world-famous manufacturers such as Cartier, IWC, Panerai, A. Lange & Söhne, Vacheron Constantin, Glashütte Original, Piaget, Franck Muller, Baume & Mercier, Chanel, Dior, Gucci, Montblanc, Rado, Raymond Weil, Frederique Constant, Alpina, Bulova, Giuliano Mazzuoli, Bomberg, Philip Stein,



Hearts On Fire Custom Halo Diamond Pendant

The HOF Custom Halo Diamond Pendant is a classic look because of the square shaped

halo of diamonds around a round center diamond. This pendant is a statement piece that you can wear every day.

Santos de Cartier Skeleton

Large model, manual, ADLC, leather strap
Determination, freedom, comfort: the myth of the Santos de Cartier has maintained throughout the successive decades since its creation in 1904. Louis Cartier granted the wish of the famous Brazilian aviator Alberto Santos Dumont: to be able to tell time while flying. This marked the birth of the first ever modern wristwatch and sealed the friendship between these two pioneers.

The rounded angles of the dial, the seamless curve of the horns, and the exposed screws make for a timeless and iconic watch that has inspired countless reinterpretations. The Santos watch features a patented strap interchangeability system catering to modern lifestyles and ease of movement that can be tailored to suit any occasion according to the choice of materials and colors.



Exquisite fancy yellow diamond jewelry, also known as Canary Yellow Diamonds,

are available at Royal Caribbean.

Diamonds exist in a variety of colors such as steel gray, white, blue, yellow, orange, red, green, pink to purple, brown, and black. Canary Diamonds or Canary Yellow Diamonds are pure yellow diamonds with a strong shade—meaning pure intense yellow diamonds.

SevenFriday, and Michele. For fashion-conscious and trend-savvy shoppers, Royal Caribbean carries Anne Klein, Fossil, Guess, Ice, Invicta, Luminox, Seiko, Casio G-Shock & Baby-G, Nautica, Skagen, Michael Kors, and the highly sought-after Shinola watch line.

At Royal Caribbean, you will be captivated by the most exquisite collection of Hearts on Fire, the world's most perfectly cut diamond. Perfect for that special someone are the world-renowned Mikimoto cultured pearls. Come in and see the superb collection of fancy yellow, pink, blue, brown, and white diamonds. Royal Caribbean has the finest platinum, 14 kt, and 18 kt gold gem set jewelry, a large selection of emerald, ruby, sapphire, and tanzanite jewelry, and a vast selection of semi-precious pieces. **Largest selection of diamond earrings in St. Thomas with more than 1,000 pairs in stock.**



Pamper yourself with designer jewelry brands, like Breuning and Rebecca. Also available is a wide assortment of everything Montblanc, including the newest collections of timepieces, leather, and many gift items.

Royal Caribbean also has the two largest camera and electronics stores in the Virgin Islands. Come in and get the latest in digital SLR cameras, point and shoot cameras, portable audio, and binoculars.

An authorized dealer for top brands such as Canon, GoPro, Fujifilm, Nikon, Olympus, and more.

Royal Caribbean also carries JBL, Skullcandy, and Altec Lansing Wi-Fi and Bluetooth compatible speakers and headphones. Royal Caribbean now carries sunglasses. Get the latest styles from Gucci, Costa Del Mar, Bottega Veneta, Carrera, Cartier, Chopard, Chloe, Dita, Etnia Barcelona, Etro, Fossil, Jimmy Choo, Fendi, Marc Jacobs, Kate Spade, Nike, Puma, Bolle, Revo, Roberto Cavalli, Salvatore Ferragamo, Serengeti, Tom Ford, and Vuarnet. **Come and choose from more than 2,000 pairs of sunglasses.**

Salvatore Ferragamo SF 909S 001

Salvatore Ferragamo is one of the world's best-known made in Italy luxury brands.

The eyewear collection uses iconic elements from the Salvatore Ferragamo brand heritage such as Gancino, Vara, and prints. The use of innovative shapes and materials creates a balance between the strong historical roots and new modern interpretations.

Shopping

A.H. Riise Mall

37 Main Street
340-777-2222
www.ahriise.com

Shops at A.H. Riise Mall: Rolex Boutique, Diamonds International, Luryx Duty-Free, Little Switzerland, Lladro Boutique, Hot Look Sunglasses, Fresh Produce, Swatch Boutique, Tissot Boutique, Rado Boutique, Turkish Grand Bazaar, MK Diamond Boutique, The Belgian Chocolate Factory, and Virgin Islands Ice Cream Company.

The A.H. Riise Mall offers the Virgin Islands' most extensive assortment of quality duty free goods at substantial savings compared to U.S. retail prices. There is no sales tax in the U.S. Virgin Islands, so you save even more on your purchases. Enjoy the world's highest duty free allowances on your purchases from the U.S. Virgin Islands. Shop with confidence.

You can choose from the world's finest names in perfumes, cosmetics, skin care, jewelry, watches, spirits, tobacco, figurines, Caribbean gifts, and more, all within one of the islands' most elegant and historic settings. Located in a series of beautifully restored 19th century Danish warehouses in downtown Charlotte Amalie, the A.H. Riise Mall is a destination for all visitors to St. Thomas. For your shopping convenience, A.H. Riise Mall offers two restaurants, Café Amici, an open-air Italian bistro, and Calypso Café sandwich and coffee shop.

All of the mall stores have knowledgeable and courteous staff, dedicated to providing exceptional customer service.

A family-owned business, A.H. Riise is also a company rich in island history and tradition. The company first opened its doors as the A.H. Riise Apothecary in 1838, when Albert Heinrich Riise became Denmark's official dispenser of pharmaceuticals to St. Thomas. The Riise family owned and operated the pharmacy for 76 years.

In 1913, the Riise holdings were sold to Olaf Poulsen, a Copenhagen pharmacist, and in 1928 to the Paiewonsky-Cassinelli family, who own the company today. While there have been many changes at A.H. Riise over the past 182 years, the same dedication to quality, value, and exceptional customer service that were hallmarks of the A.H. Riise Apothecary in the early 1800s continues today.

Find them on 



Rolex Boutique

A.H. Riise, 37 Main Street
340-77-6789
www.ahriise.com/rolex



A.H. Riise is the U.S. and British Virgin Islands' authorized Rolex dealer. A.H. Riise offers one of the Caribbean's largest selections of Rolex watches, as well as an After Sales Service Center. Rolex watches can be found in a beautifully appointed boutique located in downtown Charlotte Amalie at the A.H. Riise Mall, and in the BVI at Road Town's Tortola Pier Park. The Service Center is located inside the A.H. Riise Mall. Rolex trade-ins accepted.

Little Switzerland

Main Street, Downtown Charlotte Amalie
Emancipation Park, Downtown
Charlotte Amalie
Waterfront, Charlotte Amalie
The Ritz-Carlton
Havensight
Crown Bay
Mongoose Junction, St. John
Toll Free: 1-877-800-9998
www.littleswitzerland.com

Tiffany & Co. Boutique

Since 1837, the masterpieces of internationally renowned jeweler Tiffany & Co. have defined style and celebrated the world's great love stories. Tiffany & Co.'s strong and graphic presentation of the letter T is simplified and elegantly timeless, inspired by the architecture of New York City, and constructed into these beautiful pieces that are unapologetically modern.

Visit the Tiffany & Co. Boutique for an extensive selection of timeless Tiffany & Co. classics and new collections, including the beautiful contemporary Tiffany T.



Tiffany T hinged wrap bracelet in Sterling Silver with diamonds and Tiffany T-Square Bracelet in 18K Gold available at Little Switzerland's Tiffany & Co. Boutique.

Breitling Boutique

Since 1884, Breitling has set the benchmark for creating exquisite precision timepieces for professionals and hobbyists. Choose from the islands' most extensive selection of Breitling's top collections and custom timepieces. Breitling watches have features to accommodate depths up to 500 m (1,650 ft.), working underwater chronographs, and a variety of rotating bezels that are not only stylish but functional.

For more than 60 years, Little Switzerland has been the Caribbean's most trusted retailer for the world's finest watch and jewelry brands. Their team of renowned sales consultants, experts on both style and quality, ensure customers leave with their ideal purchase. Little Switzerland offers the widest assortment of top brands like Breitling, Omega, TAG Heuer, Movado, David Yurman, Roberto Coin, Lagos, John Hardy, and many more, all at duty free and tax-free prices. With 30 Little Switzerland stores and boutiques throughout the Caribbean, if you haven't visited Little Switzerland, you haven't truly been to the Caribbean. In addition to an impressive collection of the world's top watch and jewelry brands, Little Switzerland features an extensive selection of diamond and gemstone jewelry, including the exclusive Avance collection.

Be sure to ask about Little Switzerland's VIP amenities including best price guarantee, extended watch warranties, and preferred financing with up to 24 months to pay, making your duty free shopping effortless.



TAG Heuer Boutique

TAG Heuer, the leader in prestigious watches and chronographs since 1860, is one of the largest and fastest growing luxury Swiss brands. They draw upon their active engagement in the world of sports to create the most accurate timekeeping instruments in the world. Synonymous with superior quality, prestige, and performance, Swiss Made is more than a label at TAG Heuer—it's a state of mind. In their constant search for reliability, excellence, and precision, they never compromise on quality.

The New Link Lady: Brushed and polished steel version with grey-blue mother-of-pearl dial. It has 48 diamonds on the bezel and 12 diamonds on the dial. 32mm.

Omega Boutique

For more than 160 years, Omega timepieces have recorded the planet's history. They have also served with distinction in space, in the oceans' depths and on the wrists of world leaders, explorers, and men and women who appreciate Omega's blend of performance and design.

Visit the Omega Boutique for the island's most extensive selection of Omega watches from the Constellation, Seamaster, Speedmaster, and De Ville collections.

Patek Philippe Showroom

As the last and oldest independent family-owned manufacturer, Patek Philippe, established in 1839, remains committed to the ambitions of Antoine Norbert de Patek and Jean Adrien Philippe. They vowed to develop and craft the world's finest watches with superior precision, dependability, and functionality as well as enhanced aesthetics, style, and finissage.

Visit the new Patek Philippe Showroom, located on Main Street, for the most extensive collection of Patek Philippe watches in the Caribbean, with models that are crafted in small series between a dozen and several hundred exemplars.

You never really own a Patek Philippe. You merely look after it for the next generation.



David Yurman Stax Wide Bracelet with diamonds in Sterling Silver and Stax Wide Bracelet with diamonds in 18K Gold available at Little Switzerland's David Yurman Boutique.

Shopping



Taphus Beer House
5120 Dronningens Gade #7,
Charlotte Amalie
340-774-4010



More than 300 years ago, there was a little hideaway tucked in a protected, deep water bay on the south side of St. Thomas. This little haven was known far and wide among the seafaring lot as a place weary travelers could find hospitality without question and fresh handcrafted spirits and ales without limit. The place was Taphus, meaning tap house or beer hall in Danish. It was home to merchants, captains, and sailors, the place where all manner of adventurers crossed paths to tell tales of the sea and her great bounty.

Though the name Taphus met its end as the 17th century approached, an "X" still marks the spot where travelers converge, and today, that "X" is once again home to Taphus, an out-of-the-way little tap house tucked in the back of Main Street. Seek it out and you'll discover it's well worth the effort.

Air-conditioned and designed with an historic old world feel, it has a touch of industrial steampunk and a beautiful mahogany bar locally harvested from a tree felled by a past hurricane. Taphus Cream Ale, brewed by Frenchtown Brewing Company, is on tap along with five other draft beers. Taphus Beer House is a must-see with the largest selection of draft and craft beers in Charlotte Amalie.

Come by for a visit and enjoy a bit of old meets new while you shop in the heart of downtown. You can also purchase some Taphus Ale and other merchandise to take home for yourself or a friend.



Celebrating their 47th year in business, House of Rajah Jewelers is the oldest family-owned and operated business in Charlotte Amalie, making them one of the most respected jewelers in St. Thomas. With thousands of repeat clientele raving about their commitment to providing the highest level of quality, service, and value, House of Rajah has earned and maintained a reputation for being the most recommended duty free shopping store in St. Thomas, and is rated #1 on Trip Advisor.

Owner/designers George and KC travel the world to find unbelievable values. They offer an impressive collection of fine diamond jewelry and custom-made pieces, as well as certified loose diamonds, including rare colored diamonds, set in their unique handcrafted mountings. They also carry rare precious colored stone jewelry including emeralds, sapphires, rubies, morganite, fine tanzanites, and semi-precious pieces. They are your source for engagement and eternity rings. They also carry EcoDrive, Guess, Invicta, Luminox, Fendi, Bering, and certified pre-owned fine Swiss timepieces with full warranty and custom accessories.

If you are looking to have a relaxing, fun, and personalized shopping experience in a trustworthy environment and you want to feel like family, be sure to make a visit.

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Kay's Fine Jewelry

Kay's Fine Jewelry is proudly celebrating its 30th anniversary since first opening their doors in the Caribbean. Originally founded in St. Maarten, the family jeweler now has locations through the Caribbean including Aruba, St. Thomas, Nassau, and St. Kitts.

The family foundation was built on the dreams of Dan and Raj Chugani, who from day one were destined to create a unique and memorable experience for their customers. The brothers were relentless in their pursuit,



Iconic blue zircon halo ring

putting in endless hours perfecting their expertise of fine jewelry, its design, and its manufacturing. They also began shaping the uniquely personal and family-oriented service philosophy that's made them a leading retailer in customer loyalty, service, and the jewelry journey.



"Color change magic" Natural alexandrite jewelry

Loyal clients of KFJ kept requesting locations in more destinations so they could easily return to their favorite family jeweler in the Caribbean. Co-Founder Raj Chugani explains his family's formula for business success.

"We don't look at it as a business, but as an extension of our family," he says. "We understand that our guests come in seeking more than a piece of jewelry. They come to celebrate moments, commemorate milestones, remember loved ones,



Citizen Marvel Spiderman and Disney watches

Kay's Fine Jewelry
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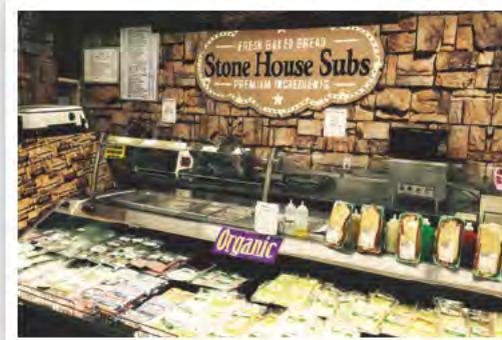


Baguette diamond right-hand rings

Plaza Extra Tutu

Tutu Park Mall, St. Thomas
340-775-5646
www.plazaextratutu.com

Centrally located in Tutu Park Mall, Plaza Extra Tutu combines quality foods with exceptional customer service. The full service supermarket features organic, local, and fresh produce, a large selection of dairy products, fresh meats, a bakery, gourmet foods, and thousands of essential grocery items. Plaza Extra Tutu provides an outstanding selection of ethnic foods, including Mediterranean and Indian, just to name a few. With a large selection of non-food items you will find a vast variety of everyday supplies. At the deli, enjoy exclusive Stone House meats and subs, gourmet cheeses, and hot cooked foods. The wine and liquor selection is one of the largest, with the lowest prices on St. Thomas. The frozen food section is extensive and many items can be bought in bulk. Open daily.



Imperial Dynasty Jewelers

Main Street and Havensight
340-774-6520
Toll Free: 888-255-3935
www.dynastydazzlers.com



Jewelers has become one of the busiest shops on Main Street.

Together, these family-owned businesses have served millions

of satisfied customers for more than 40 years. Owners/designers Raj and Vandy Mohanani, the daughter of legendary "Uncle Charlie" from Imperial Jewelers, along with the entire team ensure that every customer receives attention that is second to none. It's no wonder that customers rave about their experiences and return year after year. Be sure to stop in and see the quality, value, and selection they offer.

Dynasty Dazzlers/Imperial Jewelers offers an impressive collection of fine diamond jewelry and custom-made pieces, as well as a large selection of GIA certified loose diamonds in all shapes up to 10 carats. If you are looking for something different or rare, you'll find plenty to choose from, like natural fancy yellow canary diamonds. They also carry a full

selection of precious-stone jewelry such as emeralds, rubies, sapphires, and gem quality tanzanite to just about every semi-precious gemstone you can imagine.

Looking for 14-carat gold chains, bracelets, earrings, and pendants? Dynasty Dazzlers/Imperial Jewelers' newly expanded gold department will meet your highest expectations. And be sure to see both the new Phillip Gavriel Designer Jewelry and Samuel B. Designer Silver and Gold shops within the store.

"We are pleased to have the entire Imperial Jewelers team join us in business," says Raj.

"We are now one large family that will be here to serve you for many years to come," adds Vandy.



Dynasty Dazzlers and Imperial Jewelers want to express their gratitude for their customers' continued support and loyalty! Thanks to their faithful shoppers, the post-hurricane merger of these two highly successful family businesses has been a huge success. By doing business together in an almost 5,000 square foot location, Dynasty Dazzlers/Imperial



The Pearl Lady

340-774-5875
the.pearl.lady.1@gmail.com
Located in the Professional Building next to Fort Christian

The Pearl Lady is a hidden treasure of St. Thomas. This small family business is the re-creation of Irmela's Jewel Studio, the legendary Main Street shop that has specialized in fine cultured pearls since 1969. This unique, elegant store offers a full selection of Japanese Akoya, South Sea, Tahitian, and freshwater cultured pearls in classic and contemporary styles. Find gorgeous pearl jewelry including rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, pendants, and clasps. Also available are unset pearls of every type, size, shape, and



color—and the perfect settings, just waiting for the right pearl to become your custom-made piece.

The stunning pearl and leather jewelry line for women and men is fresh and on trend. The Pearl Lady also offers restringing, redesign, and repair for your existing necklaces.





*The most recommended jewelry store
in the Caribbean with Millions of satisfied
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Recognized as the flagship jeweler of the Virgin Islands and the original watchmakers of the Caribbean, Cardow Jewelers has been the trusted shopping source for more than 3 million customers since 1954.



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Largest selection of Italian gold chains



What you'll find there: Prices at wholesale value in diamond, ruby, emerald, pearl, and sapphire jewelry as well as in their extensive 14k Gold Department. Cardow offers their famous Virgin Islands timepieces, as well as the brands Citizen, Invicta, and Seiko. Local products available include the famous hook bracelets and locally designed island jewelry collections. For brides to be, Cardow offers the largest selection of GIA diamonds with customizable settings.

Distinction: Better prices due to their own sourcing and manufacturing capabilities; the longest family-owned jewelry business in the Caribbean; an unconditional 30-day return policy, lifetime diamond upgrade policy, and certificates of appraisal. As the only local member of Preferred Jewelers International, Cardow provides lifetime guarantees with a network of more than 106 service centers around the United States and Canada. Mention this ad to the sales associates and receive a personal shopping bonus.



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Beautiful Palm Passage

History and great shopping come together in a charming alleyway

Casual, open air dining at lunch and dinner

In the mid-19th century St. Thomas was one of the busiest ports in the Caribbean and the western landfall for several major steamship lines. Palm Passage was, and still is, the heart of this bustling tropical metropolis.

Ships would either dock at Hassel Island or anchor in the harbor. Their cargo was ferried to the downtown area in smaller vessels called "bum boats." Harborfront land that was suitable for loading and unloading this craft became extremely valuable. As a result, the shoreline was subdivided

St. Thomas' downtown area is famous for its lovely alleys and passageways, but none can compare with the historic charm of Palm Passage. Allow yourself to be lured into this oasis of greenery and ancient palm trees for some of the most invigorating shopping on the island. In Palm Passage you'll discover treasures from around the Caribbean and around the world. Magnum Jewelers and Fish Face are just two of more than a dozen shops. You will also find the island's most notable goldsmith, Okidanokh. Enjoy great Spanish food at Amalia Café or a healthy lunch at Pita Express. Look for a wide variety of merchandise including fine art, crafts, fashion, jewelry, and accessories and an inviting open-air bar that's a perfect resting spot for tag-alongs.

into deep, narrow lots which are still a characteristic of today's town plan.

Rows of warehouses faced the harbor on their narrow end and each had a pier or slip and an alley where handcarts on rails were used to distribute goods to the warehouses and stores which flanked both sides of Main Street.

A common plan was a U-shaped warehouse such as Palm Passage, with a center courtyard used as a private work area, not the public walkways they have become. Public access to the shops was on the street-sides of these buildings.

In the late 1950s the old jetties and slips were razed to make way for Veteran's Drive. At that time, Palm Passage added the waterfront archway and two additional stories that became offices and a coveted address for temporary and seasonal residents. Today, you'll find some of the island's most appealing shops in this cool passageway, shaded by towering royal palms.

Make sure your Charlotte Amalie shopping includes a visit to historic Palm Passage.

Fish Face

Located in breezy Palm Passage
340-775-5129
www.fishfacevi.com
www.undertheseaphotos.com

"This is what we've been looking for—something local, unique, and different."

This is a commonly expressed sentiment at Fish Face, where the owners' artist friends provide wonderful handmade jewelry, stained glass, suncatchers, copper sea creatures, metal sculptures, wood carvings, soaps, linens, bags, and organic insect repellent that actually works. They also offer plenty of recycled, repurposed items, local underwater photography, and friendly snorkeling advice.

Fish Face is all about color and comfort like brilliant handcrafted, hand-dyed batik clothes that are cool and breathable. They have the best selection of HIHO clothing



Gilliam's island-inspired metal sculptures, Robbin Robinson Polter's whimsical folk style paintings and prints, and Aragorn's block prints and beautiful copper images of island birds, fish, and reef life.

Visit Fish Face in beautiful, peaceful Palm Passage, right by the big friendly bar.



Owned and Operated
by Women Artists
ART • JEWELRY
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Magnum Jewelers

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Magnum Jewelers' cozy, opulent boutique in beautiful Palm Passage boasts stunning diamond jewelry alongside on-trend brands like Les Georgettes and Double Bone. Known as the jeweler that really cares, Magnum's staff is kind, knowledgeable, and inspires confidence in all their customers, from young couples making their first significant jewelry purchase together to experienced connoisseurs.

"We sell beautiful, timeless jewelry, but we also build and maintain lifetime relationships," says Albert Richardson, longtime associate of Magnum Jewelers.

Magnum Jewelers offers something for everyone, from buyers with the most discerning eye to those with eclectic taste. Don't see exactly what you're looking for? Let Magnum's talented staff create it for you.

Magnum Jewelers was founded by the multi-talented Harry Chandi, whose dedication to the quality and design of his store's pieces remains unequalled. Harry's attention to detail and his passion for creating stunning and unique jewelry set him and Magnum Jewelers apart from the others. Come to beautiful Palm Passage, where Magnum Jewelers offers artistic, exquisite jewelry and a warm reception.



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The charming story of the Sandal Man



Virgin Islands jewelry designer Sunil Mohanani knows most visitors are looking for gifts to take home for family and friends that won't empty their wallets. At Get Charmed Factory Outlet in the historic Landmark Building on Garden Street, he offers fun, affordable, and whimsical charms, earrings, and bracelets—"all the bling without the cha-ching."

Growing up in his parents' Main Street

jewelry boutique, Sunil saw the growing demand for high quality fashion jewelry without the high-end price. Sunil's original Sandals for your Neck flip-flop pendant line, for which he owns the U.S. copyright, appeals to travelers with hundreds of fanciful sandals, and

more. The list is endless. Charms come in a variety of enamels, with micro-pave Swarovski crystals, set in sterling silver with white gold overlay. You can also get the iconic flip-flop in semi-precious stones like opal, larimar, and onyx, as well as in 14 karat gold with diamonds.

Get Charmed also offers a vast collection of universal island-inspired beads that fit your charm bracelet brand. The V.I. Bling bracelet, made with a St. Thomas bead on spun silk strands, is popular with young and old alike. The V.I. Love Knot bangles are another great memento to take home for \$20. The V.I. Happy Turtle pendants come in six Swarovski crystal colors with flippers that move and do a happy dance on your neck.

Most of the jewelry at Get Charmed is designed in-house, so you can enjoy a unique and fun collection unlike any other. To complement their pendants, they have



Skull and crossbones pendant available at Get Charmed



Enamel and crystal stingray available at Get Charmed

he wholesales the popular line around the world. The charm selection grows continuously, and has branched out well beyond the original sandal. There are literally thousands of charms including mermaids, divers, sailboats, palm trees, anchors, coqui frogs, cruise ships, iguanas, starfish, hibiscus, turtles, and



Silk strand bracelet available at Get Charmed

Get Charmed

At the base of the historic steps leading up to Government Hill, Get Charmed is a quaint and friendly shop offering quality high fashion jewelry at an affordable price. Featuring the original Sandals for your Neck pendants, earrings, and bracelets, you'll find exciting, island-inspired lines offered exclusively at Get Charmed. Choose from semi-precious sandals, enchanting hand-enameled mermaids, crystal-encrusted "bling rays" and much more, all designed with your tropical vacation in mind. The charms are a great memento of your trip and perfect as gifts for those back home.



Inlaid opal pendants from the Sandals for your Neck Collection

many options in sterling silver chains in different lengths as well as an adjustable chain, crystal mesh, leather, and silk cords to fit your own personal style.

Sunil is constantly looking for ways to offer fashion-forward jewelry at a reasonable price. You'll find original stingray-skin cuff bangles, mother-of-pearl jewelry, leather and cultured pearl necklaces, and much more. Don't miss the new inlaid Larimar island-inspired pieces like the hand-made Caribbean Hook bangle as well. This must-see collection is as fun to browse as it is to buy. Receive a free gift with any \$20 purchase.

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BERING created a watch collection inspired by the pioneer spirit of his eponym Vitus Bering. The Danish explorer set out with his ship for almost untouched territories in the direction of the Arctic Ocean in 1728. He crossed a strait, which was later to be named after him: the Bering Strait.

These multifunctional watches are the ideal companions for travelers and adventurers. Equipped with a precise 24-hour display including the date and an interchangeable wrist strap made of the most surgical stainless steel mesh.

The classic, minimalist BERING design with a clean, easy-to-read dial corresponds with the character of great explorers such as Vitus Bering.

For more information, contact dso@bering.net or visit us under www.beringtime.com



Watch: 14240-303



16940-899 - GREEN

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Known for its outstanding customer service, Moe's Fresh Market strives to meet your highest expectations with a friendly and knowledgeable team. Moe's Fresh Market provides the finest gourmet food selection, including organic, gluten free, and vegan foods. The gourmet grocery includes an outstanding produce section with a sparkling and fresh variety of conventional, local, and organic produce. Ranked best meat and seafood on island, Moe's Fresh Market provides quality meats including Certified Angus Beef, grass-fed beef, and organic and antibiotic-free chicken. Seafood is always fresh daily. Within the deli, there are



exquisite subs made with top of the line Boar's Head meats and cheeses, along with fresh baked goods and hot foods. Stonehouse Cellars, the wine cellar, offers a fabulous selection of fine wine and spirits. With a team of the best chefs, experienced butchers, welcoming team members, and dedicated provisioners, shopping at Moe's is a pleasure.



PANERAI LUMINOR YACHTS CHALLENGE - 44mm - PAM 01020

The new Luminor Yachts Challenge watches are a tribute to the long association of the sea and Panerai which, as a tribute to its own past, has in recent years made a remarkable contribution to preserving the culture of classic yachts through the races of the Panerai Classic Yachts Challenge. This tribute is made clear by the letters PCYC inscribed on the dial and the outline of a sailing yacht on the back. In the case of the titanium and ceramic models, this image is engraved, while in the gold chronograph, it seems almost to float above the movement, being reproduced on the sapphire glass porthole in the back of the watch. Available at Royal Caribbean.



CELEBRATING THE BRAND



HUBLLOT BIG BANG AERO BANG CROWN OF LIGHT

Masterly crafted by Hublot's master watchmakers and jewelers in Switzerland, this Limited Edition Hublot Aero Bang watch is set with a 0.40cts white Crown of Light diamond. The 90 faceted patented Crown of Light diamond is set in a rose gold bezel on a matte blue skeleton dial. This automatic chronograph watch has a 44mm 5N gold case which comfortably fits your wrist with a sleek blue band made from a fusion of alligator and rubber. Each watch in this spectacular collection is 1 of 52 worldwide sold exclusively at Diamonds International.

The Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona is the ultimate tool watch for those with a passion for driving and speed. Introduced in 1963, the Cosmograph Daytona was designed to meet the demands of professional racing drivers. It is an icon forever joined in name and function to the high-performance world of motor sport. More than 50 years after its creation, the Cosmograph Daytona remains in a class of its own among sport chronographs and continues to transcend time. Available at A.H. Riise Rolex Boutique.



...on point!

watches



The BR05 PINK GOLD 18K from the new BR05 Collection by Bell & Ross. Find this timepiece and many more at Ballerina Jewelers in Charlotte Amalie.



SUPEROCEAN HERITAGE B01 CHRONOGRAPH 44 STEEL - BLUE
Robust and timeless, this Superocean Heritage model is powered by the in-house Breitling Manufacture Caliber 01. Available exclusively at the Breitling Boutique and Little Switzerland.



Living Legend

By Raven Phillips

Cruise ship visitors are often greeted by the talent and showmanship of a 14-foot-tall masked culture bearer. Allan “Yisrael” Petersen, often referred to as Moko Yisrael, spends hours each week performing for incoming visitors and at cultural events.

“I get a lot of mixed reactions,” says Yisrael. “Sometimes babies will scream and run, and sometimes children will want to be held and their parents will encourage them. People take a lot of pictures because they’re in awe. They’ve never seen it before.”

Yisrael’s legacy is one of firsts. In 1979, he was the first Moko jumbie dancer from St. Thomas to perform in the mainland at the Super Bowl XIII halftime show entitled, “Carnival:

A Salute to the Caribbean.” Since then, he has also been the first moko jumbie dancer to perform at the Country Music Awards in Nashville, Tennessee in 2015, and the first to perform for Congress in Washington D.C. in June 2019.

Yisrael’s life as a moko jumbie began in the early 1970s, when he balanced on bunk bed ladders with his brothers. Growing up in Nadir on St. Thomas, he was often found walking around his block on stilts he had made himself. Each year he challenged himself by going higher and higher. Yisrael was inspired by the world-renowned Alvin “Alli” Paul, who mastered the art form and started the Alli Paul Original Moko Jumbie Dancers in the 1960s. One day, Alli happened to pass through the neighborhood and when he saw the young Yisrael, he immediately wanted the young man to join his group. With the permission of his mother, Yisrael joined Alli and they spent many years traveling and performing together.

“Alli was my mentor,” says Yisrael. “He was like a father to me.”

The physical demands of performing as a moko jumbie can be quite grueling. The dancer must maintain their balance while the stilts place immense pressure on a performer’s feet, legs, and knees depending on the length of the stilts. Performing has considerable cultural and spiritual importance for Yisrael. In taking on the role of a traditional moko jumbie, his face is always covered. Dancing is his way of staying connected to his ancestors.

“As a moko jumbie, you are mocking the spirit of the ancestors, so your face should be covered,” he says. “Performing definitely makes me feel connected to my ancestors, even more so after I took a DNA test and was able to see that my bloodline comes from Senegal and Nigeria. The ability to do this was in me all along. You will feel the stress, but that’s why you need to let the spirit take over. Having that freedom changes you.”





Culture Shock courtesy Janelle Sarauw.



Secrets Behind Stilt-walking Moko Jumbies

By Carol Bareuther

You'll see them at Carnival parades, street party-like Jump Ups, and West Indian night festivities at resorts and restaurants throughout the year. In fact, moko jumbies, often described as stilt walkers, are hard to miss. Towering above the crowd 7 to 10 feet tall, these often-masked, colorfully clad characters are an iconic symbol in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Beyond the contemporary flash, moko jumbies have a rich cultural past. Knowing this history adds an extra level of excitement to any live performance.

"The art form that is the moko jumbie emanated originally from West Africa and was brought to the Caribbean by enslaved people," explains Sen. Janelle Sarauw, who learned to stilt-walk at age 6, a skill that saw her performing at home and away at events like the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Today, the Virgin Islands senator is one of a handful of cultural bearers who is reviving this art by founding the Moko jumbie group, Culture Shock.

"'Moko' means healer and 'jumbie' means spirit," says Janelle. "The first documented moko in the territory was Magnus Farrell, who was on the scene in the mid-1950's, just after Carnival celebrations restarted annually in St. Thomas in 1952. He would dance with skirts and no shoes on as he stood on the wood stilts. Alvin 'Alli' Paul revised the art form in the mid-1960s. He changed the style of the moko to wearing sneakers on top of the stilt foot platforms and dancing in long pants that totally covered the stilts, and he added the cone-shaped hats. Today, that style of mokos is our Carnival emblem and the symbol of the V.I. Department of Tourism."

Costuming and choreography is a big part of a moko jumbie troupe's routine. One who knows this well is Willard John, founder of Guardians of Culture. Willard, a St. Croix native, attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and heard fellow students share stories of their cultural backgrounds. John felt at a loss and once back home, he immersed himself in Virgin Islands heritage and started the troupe, Guardians of Culture. John

builds each set of stilts out of sturdy Douglas fir purchased from a local boat builder. With the help of his wife Curliss Solomon-John, a longtime professional dancer and talented seamstress, the two annually shop the garment district in New York for fabric and once back on St. Croix, they create outfits and routines that tell a story.

"One year we focused on symbols from Ghana, where moko jumbies originated," says Willard, whose troupe participates in St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix's Carnival celebrations in April, July, and December, respectively. "The next, we highlighted Virgin Islands symbols. Each costume featured a different symbol, like the bananaquit, our national bird; Ginger Thomas, the national flower; and the petroglyph drawings from St. John. Some moko jumbie troupes don't have a set routine; they just dance around individually. Curliss and I put together a 45-minute routine that I call 'Mokolution.' It tells the story of the moko jumbie, from its roots in Africa to the present day, in what I like to call an edutaining way."



This Denny Wong creation (showing front and back) is a 24k gold island and petroglyph laid on turquoise, encased in clear quartz crystal and set in 18k gold, available at Freebird on St. John at the Dockside Building.
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Virgin Islands Vows



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An island wedding is a memorable way to start your happy life together, and the Virgin Islands has long been a favored spot for exchanging vows. Combining stunning Caribbean beauty with the distinction of being a U.S. territory, the number of couples coming to say "I do" in the V.I. continues to rise.

Whether you're seeking a simple romantic elopement or a big bash with a hundred of your closest friends and family, the Virgin Islands has the venues and the professionals available to help you pull off your dream day. Enjoy an intimate sunset ceremony for two by sunset at Magens Bay, or go all out with a party at one of St. John's lavish villas.

There are many skilled wedding planners to choose from, making the proposition of planning a wedding from afar seem a lot less daunting. Knowledgeable wedding planners have the connections to pull together your wedding day dream team, from hair and makeup artists to the best

photographers and videographers to musicians and even fire dancers if you want to go big.

Perhaps one of the best things about getting married here is your day can be as casual or as elegant as you like. Couples have been known to don bikinis and board shorts when they take their vows; breezy, casual dresses and flip-flops are also a popular ensemble for brides. If you want to go glam, the island's stylists know how to best combat the heat and humidity, and most hotels and resorts offer a grand ballroom, gazebo, or other special setting for weddings and events.

If you're planning a celebration with friends and family, have your guests arrive several days ahead of your planned event. Exploring the islands together, whether by a day at sea with a boat charter or on land with an expert guide, is a fun and phenomenal way for you and your betrothed's families to bond with one another.

The Pearl Lady

340-774-5875

the.pearl.lady.1@gmail.com

Located in the Professional Building next to Fort Christian

What's a wedding without pearls? The most traditional jewelry for brides and bridesmaids are a pearl necklace and earrings, and also make great gifts for the bridal party. The largest selection on St. Thomas can be found at The Pearl Lady. Owners Tiare and Irmela will custom-make pearl jewelry to accessorize your wedding gown. The Pearl Lady's extensive selection ranges from traditional to avant-garde.

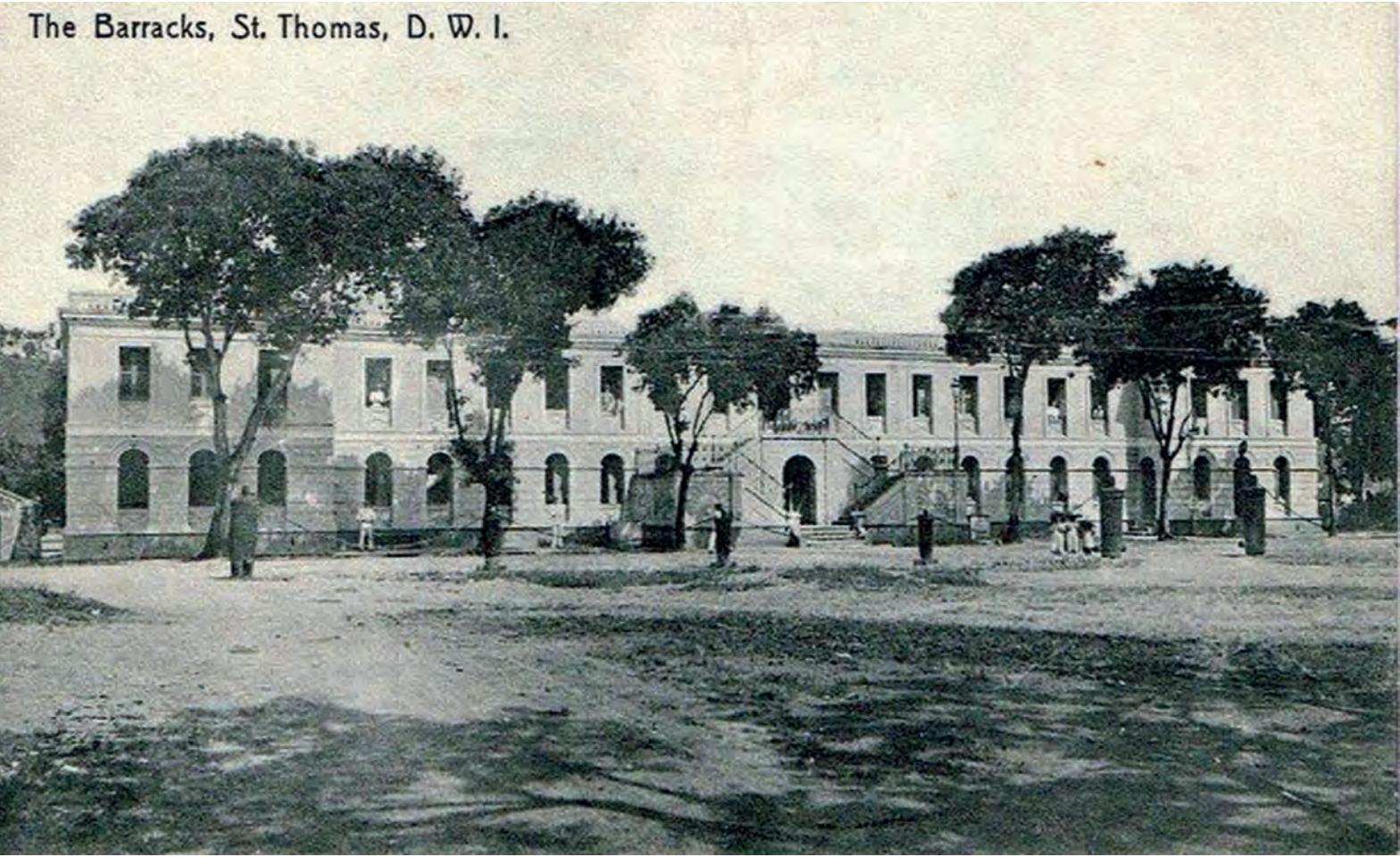
Pearls are a girl's best friend. A range of gorgeous pearl jewelry awaits you at The Pearl Lady including rings, earrings, necklaces, pendants, pins, and clasps. You will find a wide variety of the world's most desirable unset pearls including Japanese Akoya, South Sea, Tahitian black, and freshwater cultured pearls.



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TIME Traveling

In four distinct places in the U.S. Virgin Islands, you can travel back in time. These are the territory's Historic Districts—portions of Frederiksted and Christiansted in St. Croix, Charlotte Amalie in St. Thomas, and Cruz Bay in St. John, where guidelines on development allow the areas' important landmarks to retain a historic feel. A visit to any of these districts is like stepping into a bygone era; architectural styles, historic forts and churches, and private homes that have stood the test of time reflect the unique melding of the territory's colonial roots—first as a possession of Denmark to its present-day distinction as a U.S. territory—with its Afro-Caribbean heritage.

By Vincent "Doc" Palancia

ST. THOMAS

Charlotte Amalie, settled in 1666, was originally named “Taphus,” the Danish word for “tavern.” It was renamed Charlotte Amalie in 1691 after Denmark’s Queen Charlotte.

It’s here, just outside the island’s famed shopping district, that you’ll find Fort Christian, built in 1672 and named for King Christian V. The fort was constructed by Simon Lamar, an indentured stonemason, under Danish Governor Jørgen Iversen to protect the port and the town. In the centuries since, Fort Christian has served as the government seat, a church, and a prison whose most famous inmate was the English pirate Bartholomew Sharp, who did time there and eventually died at the prison in 1702. The best way to experience the fort today is by guided tour.

Across the street from the fort, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands building is another historic landmark, built in 1828 as Danish police barracks. The building was modified extensively in 1884 and

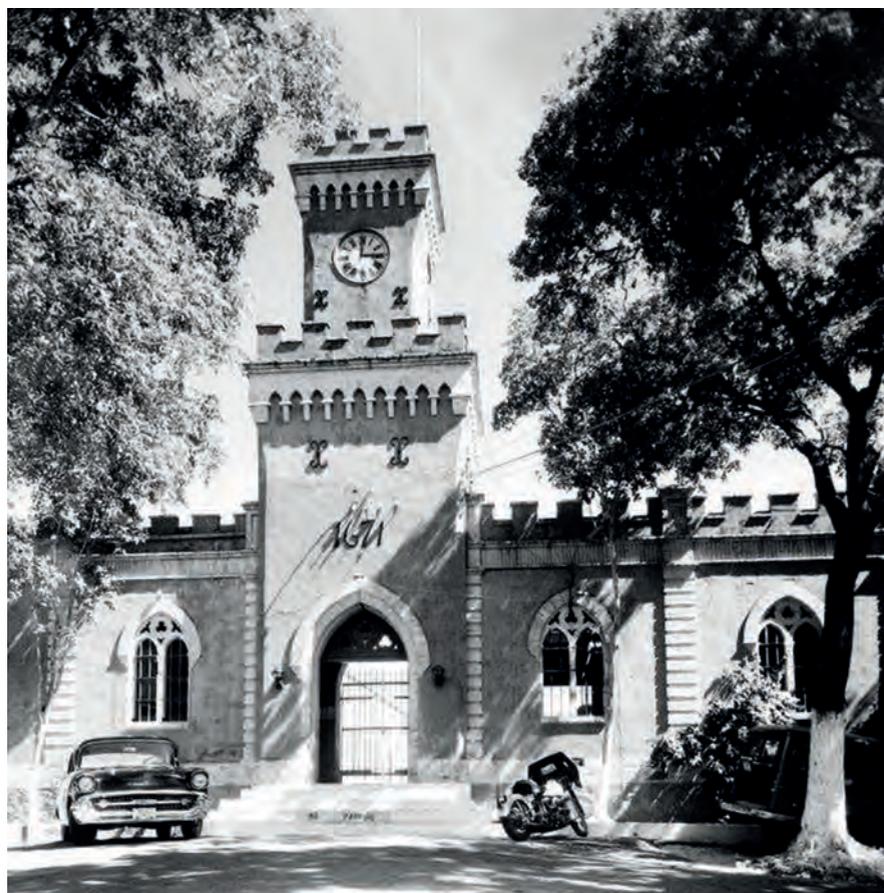
the courtyard played host to the March 31, 1917 transfer ceremony when the U.S. bought the Virgin Islands from Denmark for a sum of \$25 million. Visitors are welcome to attend legislative sessions here, or may simply stroll the beautiful grounds and learn about the property via strategically placed informative signage.

The St. Thomas Synagogue, officially dedicated in 1833 after fires destroyed earlier iterations dating back to 1803, is the oldest continually used synagogue under the American flag, and the second oldest in the western hemisphere. The synagogue is one of only five in the world with sand floors, a practice that honors the efforts of the congregation’s founders to muffle the sounds of their prayers. Another church with significant roots is the Frederick Lutheran Church, a congregation that was founded in 1666. The present-day church’s open arms-style staircase harkens back to the Danish design of 1826, when it was built. Both churches welcome visitors.

Famous impressionist painter Camille Pissarro was born on St. Thomas in 1830, and today you can visit his birthplace right on Main Street in Charlotte Amalie. Tucked among the area’s famed jewelry shops, boutiques, and other stores, the museum is an oasis displaying Pissarro’s Caribbean-inspired works alongside other pieces by local artists.

Other Charlotte Amalie points of interest include Emancipation Park, where the Emancipation Proclamation abolishing slavery was read in 1848, and The Grand Hotel, built in 1841, which hosted Eleanor Roosevelt for a 1932 trip to the island.

*Left hand page:
Virgin Islands Legislature building
All images below:
Fort Christian, St. Thomas*





Frederick Lutheran Church

ST. JOHN

The quaint town of Cruz Bay that today welcomes all visitors who arrive to St. John by ferry was first measured and plotted by Danish Crown Surveyor Julius Philip Benjamin von Rohr in 1766. The town's layout and official boundaries remain the same today, centuries later,

but many of its historic structures are vernacular wooden cottages that could easily be dismissed by the untrained eye. Tucked behind signs of modern progress like restaurants and bars is the Beverhoudt cemetery, where members of Cruz Bay's Free Colored population

were laid to rest in the 19th century. One of the identifiable graves belongs to Sarah Elizabeth Martin, who was freed sometime prior to 1797 and died on August 1, 1858, and another is the resting place of one of Sarah's 11 children, Ann Louisa von Beverhoudt, who died in 1879.

ST. CROIX

Walking tours of Frederiksted and Christiansted are a must when you visit St. Croix.

Frederiksted was settled in 1751, then rebuilt in 1878 after the Fireburn labor riot, when torches were used to burn buildings and plantations. Fort Fredrik, built in 1752 to protect the port and its citizens, today houses a museum providing a look into colonial life. The fort's red walls are similar to St. Thomas's Fort Christian, giving it a decidedly different look than the notable yellow that dominates St. Croix's other historic fort.

Christiansted, on the island's north shore, is where you'll find the formidable yellow walls of Fort Christiansvaern. The town was settled in 1735 and the fort was built in 1738 to protect the harbor, a prime shipping and receiving port for the island's primary export of molasses, which was shipped to North America and Europe to be distilled into rum.

Virgin Islands Legislature building

The fort housed at least one very notable prisoner—16-year-old Rachel Buck, future mother of Alexander Hamilton, who was jailed for refusing to live in an arranged marriage.

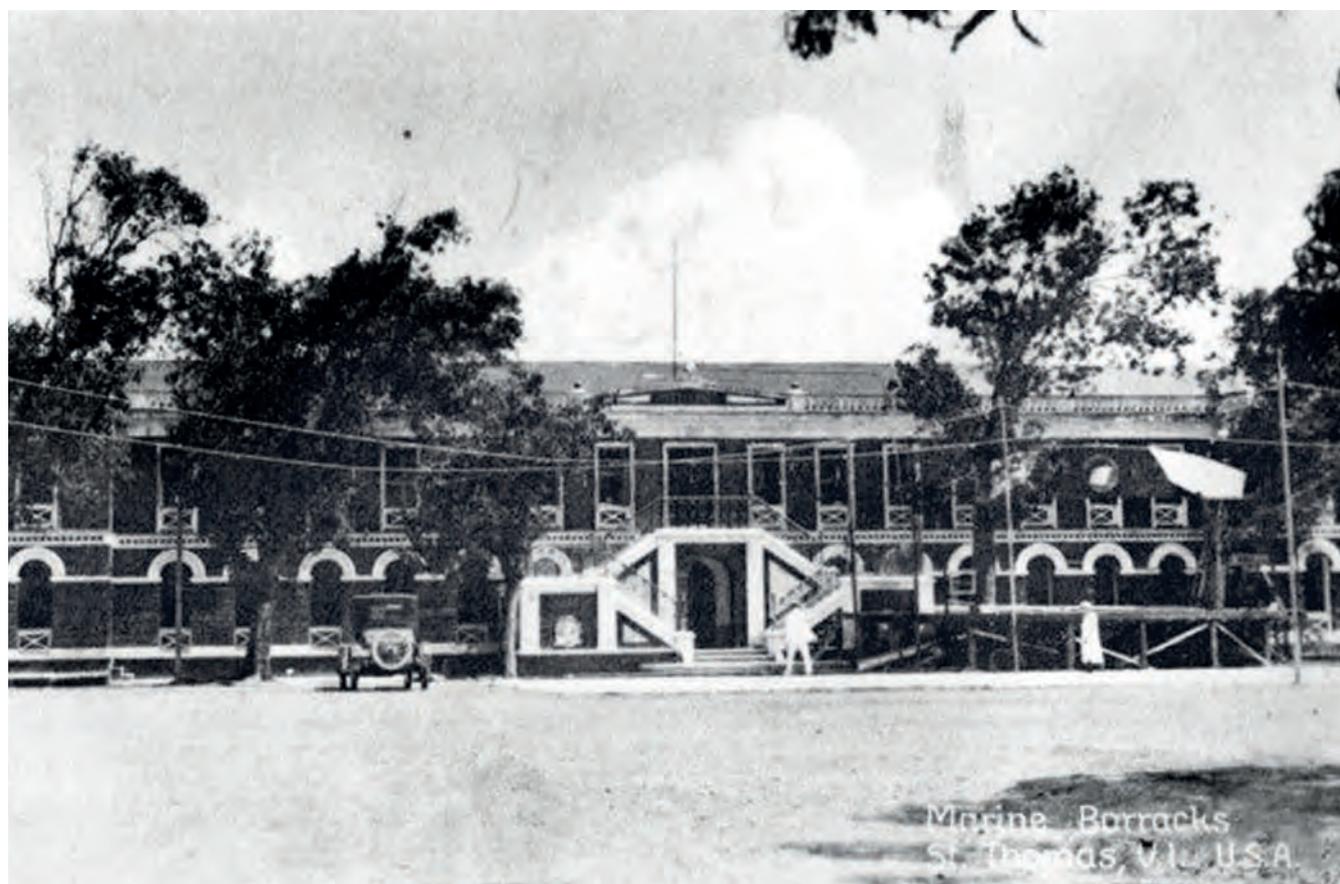
Nearby you'll find the Danish West India and Guinea Company warehouse, where a young orphaned Alexander Hamilton apprenticed prior to his immigration to New York in 1774. The Scale House and Danish Customs House, once the site where import and export taxes were paid based upon weight, are both beautiful examples of Danish architecture, complete with welcoming arms staircases and yellow exteriors with green and white trim. These buildings and Fort Christiansvaern are all part of the National Park Service and are open to visitors during regular hours. Preserved as national treasures, a walk through these towns and landmarks gives visitors deep insight into island life, culture, and the stories of the people who called these islands home more than a century ago.



Fort Frederick, photographed in 1941 by Jack Delano, Library of Congress



The American flag flies at the V.I. Legislature



ST. THOMAS

Drake's Seat

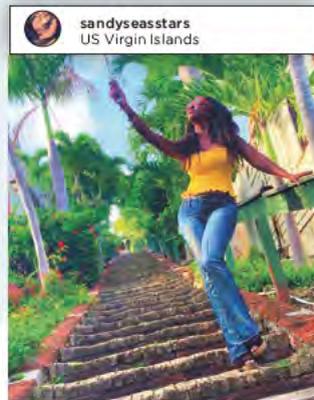
Take a seat at Drake's Seat, on the Northside of St. Thomas overlooking world-famous Magens Bay, and capture some of the most spectacular photos of the island. Built in 1933 by Arthur Fairchild, the bench at this site is named after the British privateer Sir Francis Drake, who some say used the bay as an anchorage point for his ships and this vantage point to identify ships to later plunder. Visitors can gaze at outlying islands, Inner Brass and Hans Lollik, which serve as great backdrops for any photo.



sandyseasstars
US Virgin Islands

99 Steps

These historic 99 steps that actually number at 103 are a popular photo op spot because they are one of the most distinguishable landmarks in historic Charlotte Amalie. The original name of the steps was Store Taarne Gade, which means Greater Tower Street in Danish. The bricks used were brought from Denmark as ballast in the holds of trade ships. The staircase is one of many built by the Danes in the mid-1700s to solve the problem of getting around the hilly areas. When you climb to the top, you'll find stairs leading to Blackbeard's Castle, a captivating National Historic Landmark that's undergoing repairs following Hurricane Irma.



sandyseasstars
US Virgin Islands

Fort Christian

The finely detailed architecture of a clock tower at the entrance attracts many photographers to Fort Christian. Named after King Christian V of Denmark, it is said to be the oldest structure in continuous use in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Construction of the fort began in 1672, when the walls were built to be between 3 and 6 feet thick with the goal of protecting the colony and the island as a whole island from hostile marauders. It has served as a jail, place of worship, and police station over the centuries. Today, the fort's museum houses exhibits of historical artifacts. After being closed many years for renovations, the captivating landmark is once again open to visitors. It's also a great spot from which to capture a remarkable panoramic view of the harbor.



sandyseasstars
US Virgin Islands

Smile, Snap,

By Sandra Goomansingh

For some travelers, half the fun of being on vacation is sharing envy-inducing pics with their social media network. The Virgin Islands offers a bevy of beautiful Instagram-worthy destinations, most of them so stunning, you can snap and upload immediately—
#nofilterneeded.

ST. JOHN

Trunk Bay

Trunk Bay is one of St. John's most breathtaking attractions. Its dreamy atmosphere entices the hundreds of couples who gather there each year to snap stunning photos and renew their wedding vows in an event held annually on Valentine's Day. The beach is often called the most pristine in the Caribbean, with clear, warm water and silky sands. With a 225-yard-long underwater coral reef trail, Trunk Bay presents a great opportunity for some underwater photography. As part of



destinationmags
US Virgin Islands

the Virgin Islands National Park, this beach is pristine, perfectly beautiful, and one you must share with your followers.

ST. CROIX

Paradise Point

The name says it all. Every day at Paradise Point is a picture-perfect day because it offers a stunning viewpoint where you can aim for the most colorful, panoramic shots of St. Thomas Harbor while taking in the sights of downtown. Get there by taking a short scenic tramway ride from the base station in Havensight to 700 feet above the town. When you get to the top, you'll find a restaurant, observation deck, and stores. Head up near sunset for a stunning photo op.



Main Street Alleyways

A walking tour of downtown Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas's capital, presents a great opportunity to shop and take some selfies. There is an abundance of historic Danish architecture in this area locals refer to as "town." There are cobblestone alleyways with Danish names like Raadets Gade, Tolbod Gade, Store Tvaer Gade, and Strand Gade, all leading to Main Street. In these alleyways you'll see traditional Danish architecture featuring red-roofed buildings constructed using the yellow bricks that were brought to the islands as ballast on the great trading ships of the 1700 and 1800s. In the late 1600s, fires destroyed almost all of the original wooden colonial structures downtown, leading to them being rebuilt with these bricks to protect them from any future fires or hurricanes.



Point Udall

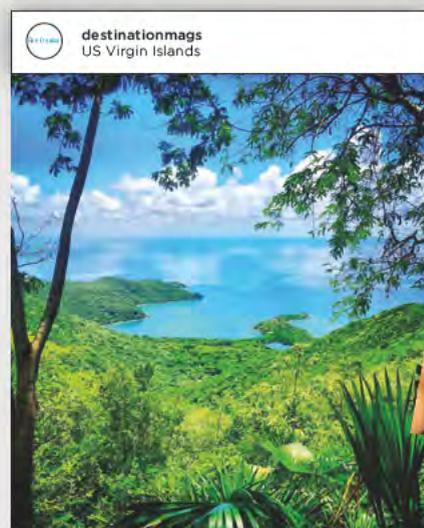
Looking for the perfect location for a sunrise shot? Then you will be mesmerized by the views at Point Udall, named for former Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. The scenic drive on the east end of the island out to the point offers a full panoramic view of the turquoise sea. Be sure to capture the Millennium Monument, a sundial designed by Bill Rich to commemorate the site's distinction of being the first place the sun rises on American soil, making Point Udall where the 21st century began for the U.S. The monument's native stonework set against the sun rising up from the crisp, unspoiled Atlantic horizon will surely draw attention from your followers.



Share

Lameshur Bay

If a picturesque, private, remote location is what you are seeking, then make your way to Lameshur Bay on the south shore of St. John. The area is always perfectly lit with bright natural sunlight for your scenic beach shots. The beach offers access to the Lameshur Bay Trail which connects to the Reef Bay Trail, where you'll find the petroglyphs, an ancient Taino site with intriguing rock carvings, and one of the most complete sets of sugar plantation ruins on island. Snap some photos here to deepen your feed with history and culture.





It should go without saying that many of the best ways to get out and play in the Virgin Islands revolve around the water. The islands offer some of the best snorkeling right from the beach, making beautiful reefs and serene sea life easily accessible. Go deeper with a scuba diving excursion; there are plenty of local experts to help you get your certification. Give Flyboarding a whirl, or soar even higher with a parasailing excursion. Rent a paddle board or kayak to explore the tranquil seas under your own power.

Play the island way

Boating is a must when you're in the V.I. Make it a fruitful day on the water with a fishing excursion, where you can enjoy a day at sea and bring home dinner while you're at it. The proximity of the British Virgin Islands and the territory's numerous beach bars, restaurants, and world-class snorkeling make it an ideal choice for a boating day; just be sure you remember your passport. Or charter a boat and stay local with the U.S. Virgin Islands' ever-expanding offerings. You can even get pizza or tacos made to order on a boat.





Of course, the V.I. has much to offer by land as well. The Virgin Islands National Park, which occupies about two-thirds of St. John, is home to many miles of hiking trails that vary greatly in difficulty. Almost all trails come with rewards like sweeping vistas, the chance to see plantation ruins up close and personal, or a beach at the end where you can enjoy a well-deserved refreshing dip.

Historic and culinary walking tours give you a deeper insight into what makes the Virgin Islands special, while The Tropical Treasure Hunt gives you the chance to solve a puzzle using teamwork with your travel companions while you experience some of the best St. Thomas has to offer. Zipline above the island's verdant hills or come face to face with marine life without getting wet at Coral World's undersea observatory tower.

No matter which island you're visiting, renting a car is the best way to get out and explore at your own pace. By land or by sea, the V.I.'s numerous interactive experiences are sure to keep you busy and coming back for more.





Bridging the gap

While the Virgin Islands is well known for its abounding beauty, the islands have much more to offer than what meets the eye. Virgin Islander Anna Monica Villa brings a unique perspective to connecting visitors with the islands' culture and history.

By Leah Hanson

For about 250 years, the Virgin Islands was under Danish colonial rule, a history that continues to foster ties between Denmark and the territory today. These historical connections have made the Virgin Islands an attractive destination for Danes who come to the islands in search of their country's history.

Anna Monica's official title of "tour guide" with Stjernegaard Rejser, a Danish travel company, belies the comprehensive, immersive experience she gives to her guests. A native of St. Croix, Anna Monica was living on St. Thomas in the 1980s when she met a Danish man who would become her husband. The couple moved to Denmark where she embraced Danish culture with open arms, learned the language, and fully immersed herself. In 2008, Anna Monica returned to St. Thomas to help care for her ailing mother and through a series of events she calls "serendipitous," the opportunity arose for her to combine her unique

knowledge of Denmark and the Virgin Islands as a historical tour guide for Stjernegaard Rejser.

Drawing on the oral histories and knowledge of the Virgin Islanders who were a part of her upbringing, Anna Monica gradually supplemented her tours with insight she gained while reviewing historical accounts written in Danish, attending lectures by Danish historians and architects, and engaging in conversation with people interested in Virgin Islands history. Anna Monica says it's the stories that were never written, but rather passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, that fascinate her the most. She seeks out the overlap between oral history, which is often full of emotion, and the written record, which is full of detail. It's this combination of heartfelt personal accounts and factual historic details, of Virgin Islands history intertwined with a Danish perspective, that makes Anna Monica's tours uniquely relevant.



West Indian culture and the island's flora and fauna also influence Anna Monica's tours. Her guests commend her for the small touches that add so much to their island experience, like a stop at Gladys' Café, where the friendly proprietor for whom the restaurant is named displays a bounty of fruits that are in season on her mahogany counter.

"She'll have the fruits spread out which is a delight for the eyes, and she makes all kinds of drinks from local fruits," says Anna Monica. "Gladys offers us a beautiful stage on which to explore local culinary traditions. By displaying everything from scotch bonnet peppers to soursop, from ground provisions to mango, she makes it easy for us talk about food."

Anna Monica offers two distinct tours on St. Thomas—one around the island, and one through the historic district of Charlotte Amalie. The tour through town starts outside of Fort Christian, constructed in 1672, and includes visits to attractions like 99 Steps. Anna Monica includes contemporary features of the island as well, like a stop at My Brother's Workshop, an organization that mentors at-risk youth, giving her guests the opportunity to experience positive change that's occurring in the territory. She's always on the hunt for ways to further enrich her tours, like when a group of Danish folk dancers wanted to come to the V.I.

"We had events on St. Thomas and St. Croix where Danish and Virgin Islands folk dancers displayed their dance traditions and invited one another to dance," Anna Monica says. "It was possible to see that many of their dance moves are similar. Traces of Danish culture is evident in Virgin Islands food, music, and dance, and the Danes are excited by their commonalities."

Present-day tourists are making more and more of an effort to seek out authentic experiences, and Anna Monica's unique background lends her tours a kind of unprecedented legitimacy. In the future, Anna Monica says she looks forward to growing her tours to incorporate even more aspects of local culture, like agriculture and dance.

"The past is interesting in helping us understand what a truly fascinating place the Virgin Islands is, but our interpretation of the past is so important in helping us to chart the future," she says.





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Don't expect the usual when you experience the wonder of engaging with a dolphin in our newly opened two-acre Sea Sanctuary. This is a unique, unscripted in-water encounter tailored for you, the participants, and the dolphin in your program. You will be greeted by a marine mammal specialist who will share fun facts and fascinating information about the dolphins in Coral World's care and the importance of preserving the marine ecosystems in which dolphins live. After your orientation, you will meet one of our resident dolphins from an in-water platform. Under the guidance of your marine mammal specialist, you will have the option to continue interacting from the platform or to enter deeper water and swim with the dolphin, making for a very special close encounter.

South American sea lions are part of Coral World's most popular attractions—the Sea Lion Encounter and Swim programs. This is one of the world's only swim with South American sea lions programs, offering a level of interaction

unavailable anywhere else. You'll get right in and swim with the boys, and under the guidance of a trainer, the sea lions will swim up to guests allowing participants to pet them, play with them, and pose for some unforgettable pictures. For those who wish to stay dry, the Sea Lion Encounter is a must-do alternative with all the fun and intimacy of the swim program without getting wet.

Try the Sea Trek Helmet Dive, which allows you to walk under water along a coral reef trail. The space-age Sea Trek helmet provides the air for breathing and weight for stability. You don't even need to know how to swim. Snuba, a cross between scuba and snorkeling, is another adventure available at Coral World.

The Undersea Observatory is great for guests who want to view marine life in the wild but prefer to stay dry. Be sure to feed the lorikeets, touch a sea star, and feed the stingrays at the daily narrated feedings. You can shop for gifts and grab a frozen colada and bite to eat. Coral World has it all.

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Mick Kollins

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it wasn't until he reached Mountain Top on St. Thomas that success was achieved with a fresh ripe banana, sugar cane extract, fresh lime juice, and a homemade secret banana liqueur, mixed of course with the islands' own Cruzan rum. The refreshing cocktail that stopped Captain Soule in his tracks pairs perfectly today with relaxing moments watching puffy clouds cast dappled shadows on the sea far below.

Mountain Top boasts much more than an unprecedented view and their sweet and delicious banana daiquiri. As a tourist destination for more than 50 years, Mountain Top has perfected the visitor experience. Sidle up to the bar on a banana leaf stool, and take home the souvenir drink glass to serve as a memory of your time here. Snap some pics with one of the life-size pirate statues, then easily share them to your social network with Mountain Top's free Wi-Fi. Pick up gifts and souvenirs from the island's largest selection of duty free offerings under one roof. With fun local souvenirs, T-shirts, beachwear, island-style clothing, hats and accessories for men, women, and children, fine and fashion jewelry, snacks, and a full selection of Cruzan Rum, there really is something for everyone.

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10 must-visit beaches

By Carol Bareuther

The U.S. Virgin Islands is fringed with more than 40 beautiful beaches. These range from intimate strips of white sand bookended by picnic perfect rocks to broad smiles of family friendly shoreline set between picturesque palms and cerulean seas. Every beach has its own character. Here's a sample of 10 and what makes each one special.



ST. THOMAS

Magens Bay - Best Family Beach

Touted as one of the most beautiful beaches in the world, this mile-long, heart-shaped, sugar-colored coastline offers just the right proportion of natural and manmade amenities for the whole family. On one hand, there's calm waters, sand enough to build castles, plenty of shade via palms and sea grape trees, and even places to explore like the adjoining six-acre arboretum. On the other, there's lifeguards on duty, picnic tables, restrooms and saltwater showers, watersports rentals, beach bar and café, and swimwear boutique. Entrance is \$5 per person and children 12 and younger are free. There's also a \$2 parking charge.



Lindquist Beach - Most Romantic

It's easy to imagine that you and that special someone are alone on a deserted tropical island from many vantage points on this bucolic beach. On the western side, sit by a shallow shelf and watch small tidal pools empty and fill with the ebb and flow of the sea. From here, there's nothing to see but uninhabited Thatch Cay offshore and St. John and the British Virgin Islands beyond. Swim off the center and eastern shores where the ocean floor is soft sand. There's a lifeguard, restrooms, and wood tables. Pack a romantic picnic to share under the palms. Find fixings in nearby Red Hook. Entrance is \$5 per person and children 12 and younger are free. There's also a \$2 parking charge.



Brewers Bay - Best Local Flavor

Come here to the west side of St. Thomas to sample a true slice of Caribbean beach life. In the early morning, join seniors who partake in the age-old tradition of a rejuvenating dip in the sea. By day, stake a place on the sand among a handful of family groups, where near waveless water is ideal for toddlers to play. Later, sample local favorites like meat-filled pates, Johnny cakes, and chicken legs sold from the food truck parked on the road. Finally, back down on the beach, past the picnic tables where men play dominos after work, watch a spectacular sunset. Restrooms and showers are available.

ST. CROIX

Rainbow Beach - Best Sunsets

This small sandy beach north of Frederiksted is situated in just the right way on this beautiful west end bay to see spectacular sunsets. By day, sun, swim, snorkel, or play volleyball over the net set up onshore. There's a restaurant and bar that sells food and drink, and paddleboards and Jet Skis are available for rent. Live music on weekends and cruise ship days usually draws a crowd. However, peace and quiet usually descends at the end of the day making nature's technicolor sunset show something almost spiritual.



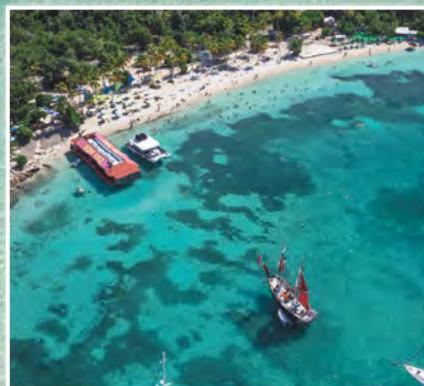
Coki Beach - Best Place to See Sea Life

School's always in session on the reefs off this north coast beach. Close to shore are blue tang, angel fish, parrot fish, and sergeant majors, the latter two of which are teeming and tame due to frequent hand feeding by visitors. Further offshore are yellowtail snapper, stingrays, and tarpon. Dive outfits, which number among the handful of beachside restaurants, bars, and boutiques, offer snorkel and scuba gear for rent as well as instruction. Next door is Coral World Ocean Park, where there is even more sea life like sharks, sea lions, dolphins, and more.



Hull Bay - Best Surfing Beach

Surf's up in the winter and early spring when East Coast U.S. storms pump swells up to 8 to 10 feet high down south to the Caribbean. St. Thomas' Atlantic Coast takes the brunt of this northern wave action and Hull Bay specifically, with its offshore reefs, creates never-ending wave breaks. The surfing here is best for experienced riders, while others can enjoy good body surfing into the beach this same time of year. Across the street, a shop rents surf, stand up paddle boards, and snorkel gear year-round and Hull Bay Hideaway serves casual food and drink.



WATER ISLAND

Honeymoon Beach - Best Beach Escape

The residential enclave of Water Island is located less than a mile as the laughing gull flies from downtown Charlotte Amalie and a lone 10-minute ferry ride from the Crown Bay Marina on St. Thomas. Yet the gorgeous sun-kissed sands on this 500-acre island's Honeymoon Beach feel a world away. Plan a half-day or full-day escape. The beach is a five-minute walk from the ferry dock. A food truck and beach bar sell refreshments, and there's a swim platform to sun on in the middle of the bay. Honeymoon is such a get-away-from-it-all location that it was the site Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett filmed their secluded sunset scene in the Curious Case of Benjamin Button.

Top 5 Adventures with Virgin Islands ECOTOURS

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With a wide selection of guided tour adventures and equipment rental options, Virgin Islands EcoTours offers these top five adventures.

1 - Mangrove Lagoon, St. Thomas

Kayak, hike, and snorkel through the Mangrove Lagoon and even visit a geological blowhole. Sunset and night kayak guided tours are available, or rent a kayak and explore on your own.

2 - Honeymoon Beach Day Pass

Experience the best beach on St. John with unlimited access to lounge chairs, kayaks, SUPs, snorkel gear, and more. And no need to pack your own snacks—Bikinis on the Beach Bar & Grill serves great burgers and piña coladas.

3 - Best of Caneel Bay and Henley Cay

Kayak across the bay and snorkel with sea turtles on this favorite five-hour tour, including lunch, departing from the Virgin Islands National Park Cruz Bay Visitor Center.

4 - Rent a SUP

Feel like you're walking on water with the newest fitness craze. Rent by the day or by the week on St. Thomas and St. John locations.

5 - Boat Shuttle to Honeymoon Beach, St. John

Shuttle to Honeymoon Beach from Cruz Bay on a quick, thrilling ride. Once there, join a guided tour or choose the day pass, and kick back with your favorite drink at Bikinis on the Beach Bar & Grill.



ST. JOHN

Trunk Bay - Best Snorkeling

Submerged stone markers tell the tale of the sea life that swims over the 225-yard snorkel trail located off this Virgin Islands National Park-operated beach. The marine menagerie includes grouper, goatfish, trumpetfish, and wrasse as well as anemone, feather duster worms, and sponges. This world-famous underwater trek, of which its entire 3- to 18-feet in depths are visible in the crystal-clear waters, is the bucket list adventure that attracts people to this nearly half-mile long strip of white sand. Food and drink, snorkeling equipment and beach chair rentals, and restrooms with showers are available. Entrance fee is \$5 per person; 16 and under are free.

Maho Bay - Best Drive-In Beach

Less than a dozen feet separate the road from the water at Maho Bay. This makes setting up camp, complete with beach chairs and a cooler, super quick and easy. The real treat here is the abundant submerged seagrass that often attracts turtles. Swimming with these creatures is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. What also adds to the drive-in simplicity of Maho is the tiki bar, VW bus food truck, and mini golf course on the opposite side of the road. These facilities add even more fun to a beach day.

Salt Pond Bay - Best Secluded Beach

Nature rules at this southeast side spot where the Caribbean Sea barely ripples into this often-uninhabited crescent-shaped beach. It's the 8-plus mile drive from Cruz Bay, nearly half-mile hike from the parking lot, and lack of facilities except for picnic tables and pit toilets that keep the crowds at bay. The rewards are an off-the-beaten-track beach day, complete with the chance to see the salt pond behind the beach, explore the wildly windswept rocky Drunk Bay, or get a Titanic view of St. John's south shore from the trail that leads to Ram Head peak.



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Try a half-day swim/sail/snorkel to Buck Island, where you can swim with the sea turtles and a variety of other marine life. Light snacks, soft drinks, and juices are available. Rum punch and beer are available after snorkeling.

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It's no secret that team building is one of the most important investments you can make in your business. Research proves that team building can impact the bottom line. This valuable pursuit requires you to think outside the box to unite your associates in an activity that's both fun and engaging. Even better if you can accomplish this goal in tandem with a beautiful Caribbean vacation, right? Well now you can with The Tropical Treasure Hunt, a venture formed with corporate team building in mind by an experienced practitioner in the industrial/organizational psychology field.

The Tropical Treasure Hunt is akin to escape rooms that have exploded in popularity recently, but the team-building aspect of these activities is where the similarities end. The Tropical Treasure Hunt allows you and your employees to come together and problem solve while enjoying some of the best attractions on St. Thomas. Find clues indoors and outdoors across the

island with the help of an adventure pack containing tools to help you solve the puzzles. The hunt is fun and engaging while encouraging teams to demonstrate communication, time management, and leadership skills. It is a completely unique way for you to boost morale while giving your employees the experience of a lifetime.

Of course, The Tropical Treasure Hunt isn't limited to corporate events. This activity is a great way for you and your wedding party to bond before the big day, or for families to spend quality time together while on vacation. It's even a hit among the local residents who applaud the experience for allowing them to explore their island in a fun new way. The Tropical Treasure Hunt will customize your day based on your preferences, so get out of your comfort zone and work together with co-workers, friends, or family to hunt for clues in an experience that's sure to be the highlight of your time in the Virgin Islands.



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the brilliant undersea world where you will enjoy a guided tour of the stunning tropical reefs and colorful fish of the Caribbean. The tour also features snorkeling adventures and spacious sun decks so you can relax and soak up the spectacular Caribbean sun. There's something for everyone. You will be provided with snacks, refreshments, bathrooms and freshwater showers. Join the friendly, professional staff of Aqua Adventures for a truly unique undersea experience.



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Go Fishing

By Carol Bareuther



Everything from catching the big one to bending a rod for dinner is possible on a sport fishing charter in the U.S. Virgin Islands. That's because more than 500 species of finned critters swim in the island's surrounding Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea waters. Sport fishing grounds here range from deep drop offs where billfish swim to inshore reefs full of good eating gamefish. It's no wonder the territory is considered one of the best sport fishing destinations in the world.

"The question we're asked most often is, 'What can I expect to catch?'" says Captain Jonathan Gatliffe of Double Header Sportfishing, a business based at Sapphire Beach Resort & Marina on St. Thomas that operates two 37-foot tuna tower-topped sport fishing boat. "Offshore, guests might catch yellowfin or blackfin tuna, mahi mahi, wahoo, barracuda, and sharks. From June to October, especially in the days leading up to the full moon, billfish like blue marlin, white marlin, and sailfish are in season. Inshore, kingfish, snapper, bonito, rainbow runner, mackerel, and pompano are common."



for a Day

Typically, charter guests can keep up to 20 pounds of fish—or 30 pounds if on a full-day charter—if desired, divided among the guests. The captain will fillet it for you. Some restaurants are willing to cook the catch and simply charge a plate fee for the preparation and sides. Four-hour, six-hour, eight-hour, and 10-hour marlin only charters are available from Virgin Islands operators. These range in cost from \$600 to \$1400 for the boat, and boats accommodate four to six anglers. Included is the licensed captain, fuel, equipment, tackle, and beverages such as beer, soda, and water. Guests need only bring a snack, camera, hat, and reef safe sunscreen.

“Our most popular charter is the six-hour,” says Jonathan. “This gives us enough time to head offshore and see what’s biting. Then, if the bite is slow or there’s heavy weather, we have time to come inshore and bend the rod. There’s a choice. Plus, our captains are happy to stop if guests want to snorkel or try freediving for lobster. It’s a trip that provides a lot of options.”

Those with a competitive edge can charter to fish in a tournament. The Virgin Islands Game Fishing Club, located in Red Hook, hosts a Dolphin Derby contest in the spring and a Wahoo Windup in the fall. The Northside Sportfishing Club runs its annual Bastille Day Kingfish Tournament out of Hull Bay each July.

Whether fishing in a tournament or on a day charter, sport fishing in U.S. Virgin Islands waters is definitely a bucket list experience.

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ella's hope

One brave little Virgin Islands girl and her family are fighting a battle against a currently incurable condition that affects only 1 in 10,000 girls worldwide.

Five-year-old Ella Gaspard was diagnosed with Rett Syndrome at age 2, a diagnosis that galvanized parents Shaine and Lauren Gaspard into a fundraising fight for a cure.

"Imagine the symptoms of autism, severe anxiety disorder, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and Parkinson's disease all in one little girl," says Shaine of this rare, severe, neurological disorder. "This is a monster of a disease that takes away skills a little bit at a time. Ella has lost her ability to speak and all purposeful use of her hands. She is not capable of sign language. Physical therapy can help slow, but not stop, the disease's progression. Ella can still walk and one of the activities she likes best, that also helps her, is to walk in the sand at the beach and be in the warm water."

To help find a cure for Rett Syndrome, the Gaspards established Ella's Hope, a nonprofit organization that provides 100 percent of monies raised to fund research grants for a Rett syndrome cure.

Ella was the subject of a very powerful song "Ella's Hope," written and performed by The Luck, a London-based duo. The song can be found on Apple Music, iTunes, Amazon Music, and more.

Locally, V.I. Governor Albert Bryan Jr. announced in 2019 that October is Rett Syndrome Awareness Month in the territory.

"Our goal is to find a Rett syndrome cure so that every little girl like Ella can live a full life of recovery and joy," says Shaine. "That is our hope. That is Ella's Hope."

Virgin Islands visitors can help by donating to the fund as well as participating in the annual events like Ella's Hope 5K and Ella's Hope Cook for a Cure, set for spring 2020. www.ellas-hope.org
Facebook: Ella's Hope



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St. John

St. John might be the smallest of the three main U.S. Virgin Islands, but what it lacks in size it makes up for in pure, unadulterated natural beauty. About two-thirds of the island is protected by the Virgin Islands National Park, preserving the verdant sloping hillsides, silky white sands, and shimmering turquoise waters for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.



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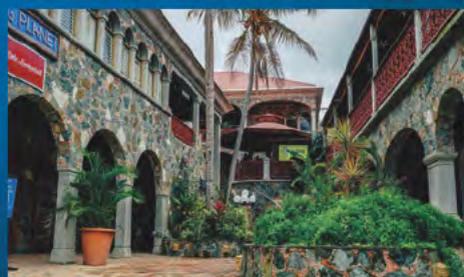
If you want to take the plunge, head out with Low Key Watersports, a PADI 5 Star Dive Operation in business for more than 30 years. Offering daily dives for certified divers, those looking to earn certifications, or those simply looking to try scuba diving for the first time. All dives are led by instructors with many years of experience. Check out their retail shop where you can pick up everything from rentals, including snorkel gear and beach accessories, to swimwear, resort wear, sun shirts, and more.





Activities on St. John are largely ecocentric. Traverse the island's 27 miles of hiking trails, from the accessible boardwalks that meander through plantation ruins or past a rich ecological salt pond habitat to the more challenging climbs that lead to incredible bird's-eye views or off the beaten path beaches. Speaking of beaches, the island boasts some of the best in the region. Trunk Bay is a north shore showpiece. Its unimaginable beauty, underwater snorkeling trail, and full range of amenities make it the island's most popular. There are plenty of tours and watersports companies on island to help you get the best out of your time on St. John.

For a small island, St. John boasts a big selection of dining options. Enjoy casual toes-in-the-sand beachfront venues, escape to an air-conditioned restaurant with delicious bar food and ice cold libations, or treat yourself to one of the island's fine dining venues, where truly top-notch meals are sure to be a highlight of your vacation. Shopping on St. John is an adventure. Most stores are unique, locally owned operations with carefully selected jewelry, T-shirts, beach gear, hot sauces, artwork, and interesting souvenirs.



Immerse yourself in the island's pristine beauty, enjoy a relaxed way of life, and see for yourself why St. John is affectionately known as Love City, a place where visitors return to time and time again.

Floating gracefully in St. John's aquamarine waters, it's not hard to imagine yourself as a mermaid. Bring your daydream to life with Mermaid Swim V.I., owned by Katie Rockefeller, whose passion for photography and the mermaid lifestyle combine to offer her guests an unforgettable experience.

Katie tailors every session to her guests' needs, and people of all ages are welcome to experience being a mermaid or merman. She'll take her time to teach you how to use the tail, and will help you get as decked out as you want, with costume options including hair accessories, rhinestones, and other embellishments. Katie has a knack for guiding children through water games and activities, and as part of the experience, you'll get 10 digital photos of you and your loved ones in full mermaid regalia. A Mermaid Swim V.I. excursion is ideal for vacationing families, bachelorette parties, birthday parties, and more. It's a one-of-a-kind experience that allows you to fully embrace the island's natural beauty while making memories to last a lifetime.



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Keep your eyes open for the "St. John Recovery Book," an in-depth look at the harrowing 2017 hurricane season.

"Freedom" Sculpture • Photo by Perdita Stapleton • ilandtings.com




Denny Wong



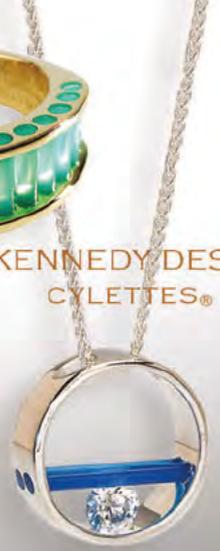
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Melissa Luterek works with clients on such issues as arthritis, scoliosis, sciatica, herniated disc, and carpal tunnel using the Pilates Method created in the early 20th century by Joseph Pilates.

She has been a certified Pilates instructor for 20 years, and studied directly with Master Teacher Romana Kryzanowska, a direct student of Joseph Pilates.



Pilates Worx was voted Best Health and Wellness Program by the Virgin Island Daily News. Melissa was featured as a model in Kryzanowska's seminal book "The Pilates Method of Body Conditioning" and even appeared on the long running TV show "Reba" as an instructor in the Pilates studio episode.

For more information or to book an appointment, call or visit the website. Ask about specially priced private or duet Pilates sessions and Pilates mat classes. The Pilates Method has finally come to St. John with Pilates Worx.





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What sets Bamboo Studio apart from other jewelry stores is that their workshop is located on-site, allowing you to see the local artisans crafting the designs in silver, gold, and precious stones. Taking home a piece from Bamboo Studio will remind you of the beautiful Virgin Islands and your favorite island memories.



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Facebook: Maho Crossroads, USVI

Frequent visitors to St. John have long known that if you want to combine your day at the beach with food and drink options, games, and live music, you'll need to charter a boat to the British Virgin Islands. That all changed in early 2019 with the opening of Maho Crossroads. Steps away from one of St. John's most beautiful north shore beaches, Maho Crossroads offers all the amenities you need to ensure a fun and fulfilling day by the sea.

Start your day off by enjoying Crossroads' watersports equipment rentals. Maho is one of the few St. John beaches where you're practically guaranteed a turtle sighting; enjoy the peace of watching these gentle creatures glide through the crystal clear water while snorkeling, or from a paddle board.

You're sure to work up an appetite while exploring the bay. Maho Crossroads offers burgers and hot dogs, perfect pairings for a day at the beach, along with specials like mahi mahi, Caribbean lobster, and local foods like roti. Papayas grow plentifully here; find one that's ripened to a nice orange color and squeeze some lime on the fruit for the freshest beach snack around. Grab your favorite drink from their full-service bar, and be sure to finish your meal with a sweet, icy cold snow cone. A post-lunch beach nap is the ultimate luxury; Maho Crossroads' sling-style chair rentals are perfectly comfortable for reclining in the shade of a sea grape tree or in the calm shallows of the bay. After you doze for a bit, come enjoy some live acoustic music on the Maho Crossroads stage, or engage in a friendly game of corn

hole, stand up Jenga, or mini golf. Be sure to swing by the retail shop to pick up reef safe sunscreen, solar gear, hats, rash guards, clothing, and more. Spend some time lounging in Maho Crossroads' comfortable seating areas; you never know who will stop by. Local artists come here to create, and even national performers like Keller Williams and renowned local musician Jon Gazi enjoy coming through to grace the stage.

Maho Crossroads is fully off grid, does not use plastic bottles or straws, and is committed to enhancing the beauty of the natural surroundings by offering low-impact amenities to perfectly complement beautiful Maho Bay Beach. Learn more and find out about special upcoming events like Mermaid Mondays and music festivals by finding Maho Crossroads on Facebook.

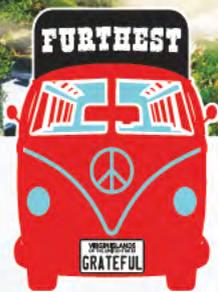


As seen on HGTV!

M A H O

maho crossroads

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Honeymoon Beach All Day Pass on St. John

Off the beaten path, **Honeymoon Beach** is the ultimate all-inclusive beach on St. John, offering visitors a bar and restaurant plus lounge chairs and watersports equipment to rent. Famous for its picturesque beauty, this tranquil beach is nestled between coral reefs on the north shore of the Virgin Islands National Park on St. John.

340 Real Estate Co.

If you've ever vacationed in an exotic location and wished you could stay forever, you're not alone. Although it might seem unattainable, owning a piece of the rock can be your reality.

St. John is rich with history and culture. One of the most attractive aspects of St. John is the Virgin Islands National Park, which Laurance Rockefeller helped to establish in 1956. Since then, the VINP on St. John has grown to 7,200 acres plus 5,600 underwater acres. This equates to approximately 80 percent of the island remaining untouched, including pristine white sand beaches.

Visitors are attracted to this small island from all walks of life and from every part of the globe. Visitors and residents alike enjoy hiking trails, swimming, surfing, snorkeling, scuba diving, and sailing, along with an array of other outdoor activities.

Regardless of your budget, the brokers and sales agents of 340 Real Estate Co. can show and sell all the properties that are on the MLS. Contact them today and let them put their collective 50-plus years of real estate experience to work, helping you realize your dream of owning a piece of St John.

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Food & drinks: No need to bring your own snacks—Bikinis on the Beach Bar & Grill serves food and cold drinks under the shade of a tent and palm trees.

Rentals: Book a day pass for unlimited use of chairs, kayaks, SUPs, snorkel gear, and floats. The pass also includes a locker for valuables and there are bathrooms, changing rooms, and an outdoor shower.

Guided tours: Join a guide on any three- or five-hour kayak, hike, and snorkel tour, and get your photo taken snorkeling with sea turtles, starfish, and stingrays.

How to get there: Honeymoon Beach can be reached by foot or by taxi shuttle (\$20 per person round trip) from the Caneel Bay Resort entrance at www.viecotours.com. Hike the one-mile Lind Point Trail from the Virgin Islands National Park Cruz Bay Visitor Center, or park for free at the top of Lind Point and hike about two-tenths of a mile down the trail to the beach.

Book now and check out their other tours. Call 1-877-VI-KAYAK, 340-779-2155, or book online at www.viecotours.com. Use promo code FUN for 10 percent off.

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Parrot Club

Established in 2008 on the beautiful island of St. John, the Parrot Club has become the premier spot for entertainment, and has been voted Best Entertainment Center by the Virgin Islands Daily News readers poll every year since the grand opening.

The Parrot Club offers an island entertainment experience like no other. Just a few minutes walk from the ferry dock and steps from the beach, the Parrot Club and its full-service bar offer the hottest gaming action in the coolest atmosphere.

"Parrot Club has become a great venue for tourists and locals alike," says general manager and all-around favorite island local Derek Athanase. "This is a very unique place in St. John because it has the feel of a low-key island vibe during the day and a festive island carnival atmosphere at night. We host the island's favorite themed Parrot Club event parties. When we host these event parties, they are the energy of the island, with local live performances on the beachfront and very talented local DJs inside our Gaming Center."

The Parrot Club was rebuilt and remodeled after the devastating hurricanes of 2017, Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria, that left so many businesses on St. John recovering from the disaster and on hiatus for an extended period of time.

Take a break from the sun but keep the scenery in view at the renowned Parrot Club Bar. They have a full merchandising campaign focused solely on their famous bar. Get lucky with

the new state-of-the-art video lottery gaming including Keno, Poker, Blackjack, Roulette, and the hottest titles found at many famous gaming destinations around the globe.

The Parrot Club offers the friendliest local staff and venue suited for gaming, tropical flavor beverages, sports hub, or just hanging out with your island friends.

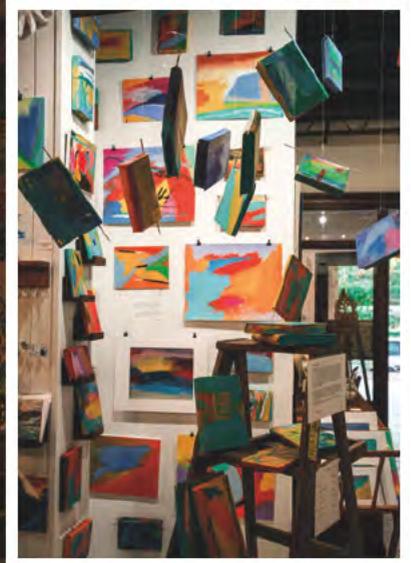
Visit the Parrot Club in Wharfside Village and follow them on Facebook www.facebook.com/theparrotclub.



ALL NEW ♣ **ALL FUN**

Wharfside Village ♥ **Cruz Bay, St. John**

/theparrotclub



Mongoose Junction

With a unique and storied history, Mongoose Junction is the premiere shopping and dining destination in the Virgin Islands. The magnificent stone and mahogany shopping center was designed and built by local architect Glen Speer and his crew of fine craftsmen and native stonemasons. The design, inspired by the Danish plantations of the 1800s, incorporates local stone, brick, and coral, and is landscaped with lush tropical plants.

Amid the beauty of the courtyards, explore a wide range of shops and galleries featuring the island's finest jewelry, art and gift items, and apparel. Amenities abound; visit the art bar, chat with the real estate agents, arrange a boat trip, enjoy the architecture, savor an ice cream cone and more, all in one convenient location.

Unwind over a meal—start with a casual breakfast at the deli, then lunch in a breezy open-air courtyard. Enjoy fine dining in an elegant tropical garden. After dark, the sounds of live local music drift out of Mongoose's restaurants almost every night of the week. Any time of day, it's a beautiful place to be.

Come, enjoy the timeless stone architecture and diverse shops and restaurants that are Mongoose Junction. Free parking while on the premises is overseen by Mongoose's courteous parking attendant. Clean public restrooms, ATM, and Wi-Fi are available, and this beautiful shopping destination is just a five-minute stroll from the ferry dock. No Virgin Islands vacation is complete without a visit to Mongoose Junction.



Mongoose Junction
Cruz Bay, St. John
www.mongoosejunctionstjohn.com
Facebook: Mongoose Junction

Mongoose Junction

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Arawak Expeditions
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PLACES TO EAT & DRINK

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Gecko Gazebo Bar
Greengo's Caribbean Cantina
North Shore Deli
Sun Dog Cafe
St. John Scoops
The Tap Room/St. John Brewers
The Art Bar

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Bamboula
Big Planet
Caravan Gallery
Friends of the Park Store
Hot Looks
Island Fancy
Little Switzerland
Lulee
Just Beach
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Portico
R & I Patton Goldsmithing
St. John Brewers Brewtique
Sugar Birds
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Beach Birds at Maho Bay

Visitors and locals alike flock to Maho Bay on St. John, to check out the fish and to party on the beach. People also like to swim with the green turtles in the bay, but the birds pretty much focus on the fish and generally don't care too much about what the people are doing, which makes for great bird watching.

Story and photos by Gail Karlsson



I have often found one of the dramatic white great egrets strolling along the shoreline, grabbing a lunch of tiny fish while ignoring the nearby bathers and cell phone paparazzi. Sometimes there's also a smaller snowy egret on the beach, while brown pelicans fly by and congregate near the edge of the beach if there is a dense pack of juvenile fish, called fry, moving through the bay.

The egrets don't usually go out in deep water, instead opting to walk along the shoreline grabbing at small fish with their bills. The pelicans have a different fishing style that's quite beguiling to observe. They glide through the air then abruptly drop down, scooping up fish and water into their big mouth pouches. They tilt their heads back to let the water drain out, and swallow the fish.

Sometimes, the pelicans will share the fishing spot with a brown booby. These birds fly low over the surface, so close that their white bellies are sometimes tinged with blue reflected up from the water. Then they dive quickly to nab a fish and fly off.

You might see pelicans, egrets, or boobies any time of the year on St. John. But some beach birds are seasonal.

Laughing gulls arrive in St. John in the summer, typically starting around April, when they come to nest on nearby small islands. These Caribbean-based gulls don't move very far in the winter, unlike the ones that breed on the east coast of the U.S. and migrate as far as South America in the winter. They make an unmistakable racket, and sometimes can even be seen engaging in courting behavior out on



the buoys. When not otherwise engaged, they walk down the beach looking for small fish or crabs along the shoreline.

Last April, I was delighted to notice a different group of birds arriving around the same time as the gulls—pink-footed roseate terns. I had never seen them before, and spent a delightful morning at Maho Bay watching them dive ever so gracefully, catching fish out between the boats in the mooring field.

It was an unexpected joy to see the terns, but hanging out with wild birds at the beach almost always puts a big smile on my face. When my sons were small, we once spent almost an entire afternoon watching a squadron of pelicans form up and dive, over and over again, into a big ball of fry. It was quite fascinating. At the time we had recently arrived from Manhattan, and I remember thinking to myself, “Wow, not much to do around here, is there?”

Now, many years later, I can hardly imagine anything better than spending a day at the beach watching—and photographing—the birds.

Above: Roseate Terns. Top right: Laughing Gulls, Brown Pelican and Brown Booby - fishing buddies. Middle: Brown Booby fishing, Great Egret strolling on the beach. Bottom: Flying Brown Pelicans, Juvenile Brown Pelican fishing. Far left: Great Egret flying

Gail Karlsson is an environmental lawyer and author of “The Wild Life in an Island House” and the guide book, “Learning About Trees and Plants—A Project of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. John.” For more articles and local information, visit www.gvkarlsson.blogspot.com or www.fishbaywetlands.com. Prints of Gail’s bird photos can be found at the Virgin Islands National Park Cruz Bay Visitor Center. Find her on Instagram at @gailkarlsson.



Yard Culture and the

By Bish Denham

Childhood on St. John in the 1950s and early 60s was the best of both worlds. A population between 800 and 900 meant everyone knew everyone. The island wasn't developed as it is now, but there were some conveniences. We had two small grocery stores, owned by the Smith and Sprauve families, and a general store, owned by Albert Sewer. Mail arrived daily from St. Thomas and was picked up at the Cruz Bay Battery. Every day Mr. Paris carried mail to Coral Bay on horseback. In Cruz Bay, for those who were hooked up, there was electricity a few hours each morning and evening, but kerosene lamps and lanterns were the norm. The roads were dirt and, in many places, so rocky and rutted one had to have a Willis Jeep or Land Rover with four wheel drive and low transfer to traverse them. A round trip from Cruz Bay to Coral Bay was an all day event.



Above: The author and her mother, Erva Claire Boulon Denham, Cruz Bay 1955-56

Right: The author's sister, Erva Denham, Giff Hill, 1957



As for being a child, the best thing was that we were safe, looked after, and loved, not just by our parents, but by all the adults.

Back then, there was a thing called "yard culture." In Cruz Bay there were several homes with large yards where kids gathered after school to be looked after by the watchful eye of a mother hen. It was after-school day care for working parents. Pay was given by way of exchanges between the adults—the barter system thrived back then—and the chores we kids did for the person looking after us.

Each yard had its own atmosphere and smell, its own energy, its own culture. Miss Meada Keating's yard, occupying a whole block, was located in the center of town. She was an excellent cook. In the early days her kitchen/restaurant was a wooden shack with a few tables under the trees where people came for a good meal. Later, she replaced the shack with a concrete building that had a real dining room.

Food was important back then, something readily shared in small ways. Whenever we went anywhere, we carried food with us, not so much for ourselves,



Fellowship of Food

but for whomever we visited or met on the road. We took simple things like fresh fruit, hard boiled eggs, Johnny cakes, or wonderful sharp cheddar cheese. Passing by certain people's homes, like Miss Agnes Sewer's, meant you had to stop to let her give you something to eat. Sharing food in this way led to sharing news and gossip. Since we had no phones, communication was all word of mouth. Food brought us together.

As we kids arrived in Miss Meada's yard after school and the first thing we got was a snack. What I remember best were her Johnny cakes. We might also

get seasonal fruit, like mangos, sugar apples, or coconut.

After eating, we did chores. Children were not allowed to be idle. There was sweeping, dish washing, dusting, and the day's laundry. Even the youngest were given small tasks. I remember feeding Miss Meada's tortoises. After chores, we were free to play until it was time to go home.

Yard culture was the manifestation of the adage that it takes a village to raise a child, and I was blessed to be a child cradled in the arms of the village of Cruz Bay.



Above: First family outing. Bish's mother Erva Claire, Bish, and her sister Erva Denham picnic on Whistling Cay, 1956



Bish Denham's family has been in the Caribbean for more than 100 years. She was raised in the Virgin Islands and still has lots of family there. She lives in Texas with her husband and is the author of three books, "The Bowl and The Stone," "Anansi and Company," and "A Lizard's Tail." You can find Bish's books on Amazon, and her blog at <http://bish-randomthoughts.blogspot.com/>.



You're on your way to the Caribbean, surely drawn to the region by sunny skies and natural beauty both above and below the sea. Like most savvy beach-goers, you've probably come armed with a combination of hats, sun shirts, and sunscreen to protect yourself from harmful rays. But the very sunscreen you use to shield yourself from those sunny skies could be detrimental to the vibrant marine life that attracted you in the first place.

The U.S. Virgin Islands is at the forefront of a global movement to protect coral reefs from the bleaching that can occur with exposure to three ingredients commonly found in sunscreens—oxybenzone, octinoxate, and octocrylene. USVI Governor Albert Bryan Jr. signed into law in 2019 a ban of sunscreen containing those three ingredients following similar legislation in Hawaii, Bonaire, Key West, and elsewhere.

Chemical sunscreens work by absorbing the sun's UV rays then dissipating them through a chemical reaction, while mineral sunscreens with ingredients like zinc oxide and titanium dioxide act as a physical barrier. The ugly truth is that even some sunscreens that advertise themselves to be reef safe still contain one or more of those three toxic Os, meaning it's up to the consumer to read the label to ensure the continued preservation of your beautiful destination.



Protect

your skin—and the ocean



*Top: Healthy coral
Above: The same coral
14 days after
oxybenzone
exposure*

"Unfortunately, oxybenzone, octinoxate, and octocrylene don't stay on top of the skin," says Harith Wickrema, president of Island Green Living, a St. John nonprofit that's been leading the charge on safe sunscreen education. "They can disrupt hormones and cause cell damage and severe allergic reactions. They also wash off people's bodies when they swim and cause coral bleaching, leading to 'zombie' coral which is unable to reproduce."

Coral reefs are considered to have the highest biodiversity of any of the planet's ecosystems and are vital to marine life and protecting coastlines. They also attract countless snorkelers and scuba divers each year to destinations around the world, helping to fuel tourism while providing an otherworldly experience for those who find peace floating among their colorful beauty. Even former President Bill Clinton, who's visited the USVI numerous times as part of Clinton Global Initiative post-disaster recovery events, lauds the USVI ban, which goes into effect March 30, 2020.

"Removing harmful sunscreen chemicals from heavily populated areas gives the coral reefs a chance to recover," says mineral

sunscreen manufacturer Stream2Sea CEO Autumn Blum in her testimony before the Virgin Islands Legislature. "It's still a little early to formally document the reef's recovery, but we're hearing numerous reports that reefs in Hawaii are showing signs of improvement resulting from increased sunscreen awareness, even before the bans take effect."

What does this mean for you? You'll need to get a little more creative with your sun protection. Check out the many reef safe sunscreen choices, including products from companies like Stream2Sea, or some formulas offered by Banana Boat, Coppertone, and other major manufacturers. Do some research before you buy by perusing the Environmental Working Group's sunscreen rating system, or reading more about the issue at Island Green Living's website, www.islandgreenliving.org. You could even forego sunscreen altogether in favor of protective clothing.

Enjoy the sun and all the ocean has to offer by reading the label to verify your sunscreen's ingredients before you buy. Say no to the three toxic Os—oxybenzone, octinoxate, and octocrylene—to protect yourself and the beautiful undersea world.

Island Green:

A force for sustainability

Visitors and community invited to join efforts

Island Green Living Association has long been lauded for its sustainable efforts on St. John and throughout the territory. It got its start more than 15 years ago with the mandate to promote green development and expanded to encompass all aspects of sustainable living on its 10th anniversary. The award-winning non-profit, backed by a contingent of dedicated volunteers, promotes eco-friendly living with the goal of moving toward net-zero waste and carbon neutrality. Key to its mission is the mindset that much of what society considers waste is actually a resource.

Island Green has been a trailblazer over the years. Its ReSource Depot has allowed nearly 300,000 pounds of salvageable building material, furniture, and other household items to be repurposed or reused. Likewise, hundreds of thousands of aluminum cans have been collected, crushed, and recycled. Island Green is a strong supporter of green education and recycling/eco-friendly legislation. With Island Green's vast knowledge, its community education efforts led to new laws passed to ban plastic straws as well as toxic sunscreen containing oxybenzone, octinoxate, and octocrylene, which are devastating to marine life, coral, and human health.

"We could not do what we do without the dedication of our volunteers and the generosity of our donors, both those in the community and visitors who contribute their time, intellectual capital, and of course, funds," says Harith Wickrema, volunteer president of Island Green.

"Volunteering on St. John is something that I've always done since my first visit in 1993," explains Mark Lo Sasso who, with his family, has helped Island Green collect and crush aluminum cans. "The environment is a cause I champion every day, so when I found out about Island Green Living, it was the

perfect way to spend time helping the island I love and the world we live in."

As a new decade dawns, Island Green continues to expand its efforts. A new composting program has been initiated, with the purchase of a chipper via grant funding. Phase one will focus on vegetative chipping.

"It is a win all around," says Harith. "Not only do we get to keep this natural resource here on island, but money and energy are saved because vegetative debris no longer needs to be transported to landfills and the material doesn't add to the already maximized landfill capacity."

The organization's new Sustainable Living Center, currently being developed, will offer a groundbreaking approach to accelerating zero waste/energy sustainability including facilities for composting, recycling glass, plastic, and used cooking oil from restaurants for power, solar energy, co-op food market and garden, expanded ReSource Depot, green education, and a community center.

Contact Island Green today to volunteer with the organization, make a tax-deductible donation, or learn more about the organization's initiatives.



Volunteers

Island Green Living Association
340-473-7870
www.islandgreenliving.org
info@islandgreenliving.org
harith@islandgreenliving.org



Island Green's reef safe sunscreen victory

How to be a better (VIRGIN ISLANDS) lover



Story and photos by Gail Karlsson

You are attracted to the U.S. Virgin Islands' physical beauty, of course, but what about making a deeper, more personal connection? Here are a few tips for getting the most out of your relationship with the USVI, whether this is your first time, or you have a regular thing going.



Start off with an appropriate greeting

Meeting someone with a smile is welcome everywhere. But to get a really warm response from a Virgin Islander it helps to say “good morning,” “good day,” “good afternoon,” or “good night” when you meet up with someone—before you jump into any other business. Otherwise you might find yourself getting the brush off.



Be open to new approaches

Things don't always get done here the same way as you do them at home. But maybe that's how Virgin Islanders like it. And you might enjoy exploring other people's styles.

Be a good listener

We all have different perspectives. Virgin Islanders have experienced a complex and troubled history, and it helps for visitors to spend some time and effort learning about that. Also, life in paradise is not always a day at the beach. In fact, sometimes terrible storms pass through and tear up people's hearts and homes. Compassion brings people closer.





Use protection

Skin is very sensitive. And so are coral reefs. The Virgin Islands passed legislation to ensure that sunscreens used here are safe for reefs as well as people. You are free to use products containing zinc oxide and titanium oxide, but not ones with oxybenzone and octinoxate. Also go easy on spraying sunscreen at the beach so you and those close to you don't have to breathe in toxins. And be sure to wear clothes when you go to town, for sun protection as well as to avoid over-exposure. Many Virgin Islanders think bare skin is best seen in private.

Help with everyday challenges

Water: There are no lakes or rivers, so most houses collect rainwater in cisterns, and people try to use it sparingly, rather than taking long romantic showers.

Cistern water is generally safe to drink, and carrying reusable water bottles rather than plastic one reduces litter and expensive waste disposal costs.

Electricity: People tend to use air conditioning sparingly because energy is difficult and expensive to produce on small islands. At night, the cooling trade winds can feel wonderful on bare skin.

Litter: Pristine beaches make everyone happy, and studies have shown that those who share in tidying up generally enjoy better personal relationships. It's worth a try. Meanwhile, single-use plastic bags often get into the water, where turtles choke on them thinking they are tasty jellyfish. The turtles will definitely love you more if you carry reuseable bags.

And finally, don't forget to drive on the left.



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Take a taste of the Virgin Islands

By Carol Bareuther

Take one-part native ingredients: scotch bonnet peppers, boniato sweet potatoes, West Indian pumpkin, and seafoods like whelks, conch, and spiny lobster. Combine these with imports such as breadfruit and sugar cane transported by European explorers and salted fish and cornmeal from shipboard stores, as well as mango, ginger, and eggplant that arrived via Chinese and East Indian immigrants. Now, add in cooking methods like “barbacoa” or barbecuing used by the ancient Amerindians, and foraging skills by enslaved Africans who added culinary herbs to the pot. This is the recipe for Virgin Islands cuisine. It’s a preparation started, stirred, and perfected over the past 400-plus years and it’s one that traces the U.S. territory’s migratory history in an incredibly tasty way. Today, even though Virgin Islands restaurants boast trendy white-tablecloth cuisine, no visit is complete without trying something local to eat.

“Everyone enjoys sampling foods typical of the place they are visiting,” says Gladys Isles, owner of Gladys’ Café, a landmark located in Charlotte Amalie’s historic Royal Dane Mall. “Fresh whole ole wife Creole-style with fungi. Conch in lemon butter sauce with sweet potatoes and plantains. Kallaloo soup. These are some of our most popular items.”



Local restaurants and food trucks as well as seasonal food fests such as at Carnival time in April on St. Thomas, July in St. John, and December in St. Croix, are the best places and times to taste Virgin Islands fare. Here are five dishes to try:

1. Fish and fungi. A whole fish, head on, bone in and tail attached and steamed or pan-fried is the Virgin Islands’ unofficial national dish. The fish is a pot fish, like ole wife, caught in waters off shallow reefs. It’s served smothered in a thick chunky Creole-style sauce made of onions, tomatoes, and a squeeze of lime. Fungi, a cornmeal polenta-like dish flecked with okra, is a side as essential as fries with a hamburger. This dish dates back to slavery days when Danish law permitted each enslaved person a weekly ration of salted herrings and cornmeal.



2. Kallaloo. Eating this green soupy stew on New Year’s Day is said to bring good luck. The recipe starts with a leftover ham bone from Christmas. Broth, bits of salted pig tail, flaked fresh fish, and greens like spinach, okra, celery, parsley, and thyme add substance and savor. The name comes from the traditional green, kallaloo, the leaves atop the taro or dasheen plant. An old-time version of this recipe from St. Croix calls for local greens like papalolo, pusley, and bata-bata.



- 3. Conch in butter sauce.** This large sea snail's meat featured on the menu of the island's inhabitants more than two millennia ago as evidenced by shells found in archaeological digs. Today, conch meat is pressure cooked to tenderize. Then, it's cut into bite-sized pieces, seasoned with an onion-butter sauce and served with thick rectangular-cut flour dumplings.
- 4. Dum(b) bread.** A pie-shaped wedge of rib-sticking dum(b) bread stuffed with cheese is an age-old breakfast staple. Dum refers to an Indian cooking style where a heat source above and below gives the bread a scrumptious brown crust. The utensil of choice is a coal pot or coal stove, whose roots trace back to Africa.
- 5. Tarts.** Stewing was the most popular way to preserve tropical fruits like tart red guavaberries, mangoes, pineapple, guavas, and coconut prior to refrigeration. The result also makes a great dessert filling. Fill a pie crust with these stewed fruits, weave a lattice work of dough on top, and a tart is born.

Amalia Café/Meson Amalia

5143 Palm Passage
340-714-7373
www.amaliacafe.com

Amalia Café is a delightful, open-air Spanish themed restaurant in historic downtown St. Thomas' Palm Passage. Owner Maynard first developed his love of wholesome, delicious Spanish cuisine while working with Chef Francisco Sancho of Barcelona who became his mentor and friend. The menu is heavy on tapas, with favorite Spanish entrées and daily specials. The wine list offers a nicely priced selection of hard to find Spanish labels and they offer a popular catering choice for island parties. Maynard and Helga's other food business, Pita Express, delivers tasty, nutritious lunches to downtown shops and offices. A family business through and through, Maynard and Helga's two daughters, Aviela and Abella enjoy lending a hand at Amalia Café. The couple's eldest, Ammiel, is a freshman at Grove City College in Pennsylvania, and he looks forward to waiting tables at his family's restaurant during school breaks.



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Helga and Maynard, daughters Aviela and Abella, son Ammiel and the Meson Amalia staff welcome you to enjoy wonderful Spanish cuisine.



Old Stone Farmhouse welcomes Executive Chef Justin Werle, who began his tenure at the revered island restaurant in October 2019. Read on to learn about his background and goals for the future of OSFH.

Tell us a bit about yourself. Where are you from and what made you want to become a chef? Tell us about your training and how you landed at Old Stone Farmhouse.

I was born and raised in Stuart, Fla. My family ran a fish smokehouse called Mrs. Peters for four generations. From a young age, I was in commercial kitchens and surrounded by food and chefs. We owned a catering company as well and I was always a part of the family business in some way, shape, or form. Around 14 years old, I had a tasting menu for the first time and immediately begged the chef to stage in the kitchen. With that stage, I was hooked on food and fine dining, which seemed so far ahead of what I knew.

Around that time, I learned about the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. and knew that I wanted to attend the famous school. After writing letters and getting some financial support, I was able to attend and graduate. From there, I started working in the best restaurants I could get into. My cooking background includes tenures at Blue Hill at Stone Barns under Chef Dan Barber and The Farrington House under Chef Colin Bedford, with several stages at many high-end restaurants across the country. After some time, I went back to Florida to run the family business and start a private catering company. Plans changed when a friend in Pittsburgh told me about an exciting new French restaurant opening

up there and asked me to come on board. Up until October 2019, when I arrived on St. Thomas to begin as executive chef at Old Stone Farmhouse, I worked as the sous chef of Poulet Bleu in Lawrenceville, Pa. cooking classic French bistro food and enjoying all that goes along with it. We won several awards in my tenure at Poulet Bleu, including best new restaurant.

My goal has always been to work under the best of the best and to see as much as possible. I love fine dining and all that goes along with it, but I also really enjoy the historical and scientific process behind food. What really comes out of cheffing is giving guests a moment of happiness or highlighting a special moment. Being a chef for me is a lot like conducting an orchestra; many moving parts, a lot of practice, and finally a great show for the audience. One of my favorite chef-related quotes is, "A cook is a curator of happiness," which is something I try to remember every time I'm working.

When I heard about an opening at the Old Stone Farmhouse for the executive chef position, I saw an opportunity to bring my experience and vision to a historic restaurant that has been special to tourists and residents for a very long time. With time, I hope to become a curator of happiness for guests who come to the Old Stone Farmhouse so they leave the restaurant with memories that will last a lifetime.



Talk about the OSFH menu. What is the overall theme and what influences helped shape the menu items?

The menu at the Old Stone Farmhouse has been shaped by the love of good food, by its owners, staff, and the people who call the island home. As the chef, I continue to strive for excellence in every regard. My food "style" has a lot of French influence and I hope to create a menu that highlights the restaurant and complements the extensive wine cellar at the Old Stone Farmhouse. I expect to incorporate a lot of local seafood and products and offer them in a way that will appeal to a range of diners. A chef should cook food that considers what's around him and I take as many cues as I can from the local area to create a menu that allows the character of St. Thomas shine.



How have modern-day trends influenced the way you cook? How do you accommodate specialty diets like those who want to eat organic or gluten-free, the desire for locally sourced ingredients, and the common practice of photographing one's meal for social media?

Chefs must be aware of modern diet trends. I always look to have a varied menu that has options and allows alterations for any guest to enjoy. If you have a special diet, I will make every effort to make your night a satisfying one.

As for locally sourced food, that is an absolute mission for me. You cannot have good food without good ingredients and finding those ingredients is possibly the highest responsibility of a good chef. Without good purveyors, there are no good chefs.

As far as photographing one's food is concerned, some chefs ban photography because they consider it a hassle to the meal. I can think of several chefs in New York City who have adopted this policy. I think that if you want to take a photo of my food, it's a compliment. It's your experience and I am here to enhance—not hinder—that experience.

The biggest thing I'm a proponent of however is classic cooking. Everyone wants to make the next cronut or crack pie or extreme new items. Few people stop and think, "When's the last time you had a good peach melba?" The most Instagrammable and photogenic dishes are barely made anymore. That is a food trend I most want to see.

Which dish to you enjoy preparing the most? Does this differ depending on whether you're at the restaurant or at home?

I think a braised dish like coq au vin or beef bourguignon holds a special meaning in a cook's heart. Most cooking involves take good ingredients and doing as little as possible in order not to muddle the flavors. Braising, on the other hand, allows a cook to take a product and transform it into something special. Most people consider French food to be "stuffy" or exclusive and yet most French food is a product of secondary ingredients. Rather than the filet of beef, consider the beef cheek; rather than the breast of chicken, consider the thigh.

When at home and cooking for guests I often choose to do braises for their ability to satisfy and the ease of cooking from a single pot. I'm also a huge fan of seafood, particularly mussels in wine and heavy cream sauces. For special occasions, duck and lamb are at the top of the list for a good home-cooked meal. As for a wine pairing, nothing comes close to the wines of the Condrieu.



What challenges you when you're in the kitchen? What do you love about what you do?

The best quote I can think of harks back to an idol of mine, Fernand Point of restaurant La Pyramid: "In all professions without doubt, but certainly in cooking, one is a student all his life." The hardest challenge I sometimes find is, for instance, when tomatoes are in season they are at the peak of flavor and those first tomatoes are so exciting. Those first dishes with those tomatoes are generally well thought-out and

delicious and you as the chef are excited as well. Maintaining that excitement after three months of great tomatoes is difficult and challenging. How many dishes can you make with tomatoes, or peas, or eggplants? Finding that excitement at week 12 is the challenge.

The thing I love the most about food is the way in which it brings people together. Dinner with family members, going out for celebrations, or any highlight in your life is most often associated with food. When guests come to eat, they are generally comfortable and happy, and when I provide a good experience it only adds to their celebration.

How static is the OSFH menu?

What items are the most popular among diners?

My goal at the Old Stone Farmhouse is to have a menu that is composed of, simply put, good food. Things I would want to eat and enjoy. A good menu does not have to be ever-changing; it should always take into consideration the time of the year and what is in peak while striving to maintain a standard that ensures a great experience. With food, I love to hear when people talk about their experiences of other places and how much the food reminds them of certain memories they hold dear. That is the goal with every dish on the menu. The menu will be changed frequently, with staples that shine.

What changes, if any, can customers expect to see on the OSFH menu in the future, and why have you decided to make those changes?

I hope customers will find something familiar, yet new and exciting. A restaurant is a place of hospitality and goodwill. What is going to be on the menu depends on the diners and the seasons. If great mushrooms come in then they will be on the menu; if we get some good snapper, then that's what we'll serve. I want to also focus on classic dishes that people don't see anymore yet are astoundingly good. When's the last time you ate scallops St. Jacques or ajo blanco? My classical background reveals itself in these sorts of dishes and, hopefully, people will appreciate the classics as well as the new.

Check in with our guide to U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Gladys' Café

Royal Dane Mall West
340-774-6604



Fire can't keep St. Thomas's spicy lady down. After her Royal Dane Mall restaurant was damaged in a July 2019 fire, Gladys is thrilled to be reopening three alleys away where Royal Dane Mall meets Main Street. Here, you'll find the Creole Caribbean and continental breakfast and lunch offerings that Gladys has long been known for.

Sample all four varieties of Gladys' famous homemade hot sauce—it makes great gifts for your spicy food-loving friends. Feast on conch or the roti du jour. Choose from fresh fish, stewed oxtail, curried chicken, curried goat, and jerk chicken breast. Enjoy favorites like deli sandwiches, burgers, and stuffed avocado salad. Enjoy an exotic fresh fruit colada of mango, soursop, passion fruit, or a ginger beer, and add a splash of rum. It's also rumored that Gladys' Café makes the best Bloody Mary in town. Open for breakfast from 7 a.m. and lunch from 11 a.m. Open seven days a week.



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340-776-1595
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50th
ANNIVERSARY



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Bar & Restaurant
St. Thomas, USVI

3400 Veterans Drive
340-776-2976
www.petitepumproom.com



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Hook, Line & Sinker

Frenchtown, St. Thomas
340-776-9708
www.hlsvi.com

This is why you came to St. Thomas—seaside dining serving the islands’ freshest seafood, steaks, and spirits. Bright, happy, and newly reinvented, this historic restaurant on the dock has served hungry visitors and locals for more than 30 years. Watch harbor traffic, seaplanes, and fishermen returning with their catch from the new outdoor terrace on the boardwalk or choose to dine in AC with panoramic views of the sea. Enjoy lunch or dinner seven days a week and catch a sporting event with friends with a fresh, locally brewed beer. After one bite, this restaurant will have you hook, line, and sinker.

Friendly, Funky Frenchtown

Frenchtown, on the waterfront just west of Charlotte Amalie, is the place to party like a local

Story has it that fishermen from St. Barth in the French Caribbean were blown off course in a storm and ended up on St. Thomas. They liked St. Thomas so much that they decided to settle here and plenty of friends and relatives soon followed.

Today the fishing fleet still goes out in the dark of night and their catch is ready for sale at the start of the day. That means the party starts before lunch and continues well into the wee hours. You will find an assortment of restaurants and clubs, all with a friendly vibe, a menu to tempt every palate, and a price tag to suit every budget. If you are there during business hours, be sure to check out the French Heritage Museum for more history of the area.

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Dining

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6501 Red Hook Plaza #1
340-779-2069
www.xobistro.net

Enjoy the casual elegance of XO Bistro, conveniently located on the East End of St. Thomas, in the heart of Red Hook, and an easy walk from the St. John ferry dock. The stylish dining room is wrapped around a large centrally located wine and cocktail bar, perfect for a drink after work or cocktails with friends during twice-daily happy hours.



Explore and enjoy the best the Caribbean has to offer as their culinary team blends the spices and flavors of the islands in their own unique style for lunch and dinner every day of the week.

The award-winning wine menu contains more than 150 selections, from the legendary growths and vineyards of France to the small artisanal producers of Sonoma County.

340-779-2069 • www.xobistro.net
6501 Red Hook Plaza Suite 1, St. Thomas USVI
Twice Daily Happy Hour 11am - 6pm & 10pm - 2am
Lunch 11am - 5pm Dinner 5pm - 12 midnight

The lush and breezy waterfront atmosphere of The Easterly embraces the simplistic and laid-back Caribbean lifestyle. Tucked away in an oasis of palm trees and rich greenery, the restaurant and bar take on a Bohemian island vibe. The menu will be ocean-to-table focused, with ceviches, crudos, octopus, shellfish, lobster, and whole grilled fish as mainstays. Locally grown produce and local flavors complement the dishes, all cooked over the kitchen's wood-fired oven, adding distinct rustic flair to each plate. The Easterly offers one of the Virgin Islands' most robust beverage programs with innovative craft cocktails, twists on Caribbean favorites and an extensive list of craft beers and wine. The approachable island menu and outdoor locale promise a social, vibrant and interactive dining experience in the heart of Red Hook, St. Thomas. Find us on Instagram: @EasterlyStThomas

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"What if Jimmy Buffet gave a party & everybody came? It would look like Duffy's Love Shack. Its almost guaranteed to blow your inhibitions away . . . It's Parrot Head paradise."
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The middle of a parking lot is probably the last place you'd expect to find a tiki bar, and yet there Duffy's Love Shack is, in the middle of Red Hook Plaza's parking lot, pulling a lively crowd each night. Whether it's the island-style details, like thatched awnings and a bamboo bar, or the unique drinks served in a myriad of vessels from fresh coconuts and pineapples to race cars, Duffy's Love Shack has served as the epicenter of Red Hook nightlife for thirty years.

Check out what may be the longest happy hour on island daily from 3 to 7 p.m., and don't miss Duffy's delicious Caribbean lobster nights on Wednesday. King crab is on special on Saturdays, and ladies drink free on Wednesdays from 9 p.m. to midnight. Duffy's is kid-friendly through the dinner hour.

Duffy's is a must-do on your Virgin Islands vacation. Bring your friends and see if you can down their famous Love Shack Volcano, a 50-ounce "frozen tropical extravaganza served flaming with potent berry lava flows." Duffy's tropical-influenced grub is the perfect bar food; their pu pu platters, each with its own grilling hibachi, makes dining here a fun and interactive experience.

Locals and visitors alike gather at Outriggers Red Hook to enjoy casual open-air dining in St. Thomas. Located next to the ferry dock in Red Hook, sit and enjoy the view of the ferries and fishing cruisers. Owned by a father and son team, Outriggers Red Hook specializes in fresh local caught fish. The lobster mac and cheese, fried shrimp, and the lobster sausage are must-haves. You can't go wrong with anything on this amazing menu. Chef Austin even welcomes customers to bring in their own fresh catch. Make sure you save room for the delicious desserts. Whether you are fresh off the beach, ferry, a fishing charter, or just want a great meal and drink, Outriggers Red Hook is the place to be.



Outriggers

6501 Red Hook, St. Thomas
www.outriggersredhook.com
 11a.m. to 10p.m. Monday to Saturday



Taste, Touch, and Feel St. Croix at St. Croix AgriFest

By Anquanette Gaspard

A source of livelihood on St. Croix, agriculture is widely celebrated at Agriculture and Food Fair, better known as AgriFest. The Agriculture and Food Fair began in 1971, when the St. Croix community recognized the need to celebrate their rich agriculture traditions. This three-day exposition takes place each year in February, attracting a crowd of more than 30,000 to the fairgrounds in Estate Lower Love. Here, attendees from near and far can savor, feel, and appreciate everything on St. Croix that is rooted in agriculture from locally produced fruits and vegetables to livestock, arts and crafts, and local cuisine.

Food, fun, family, and friends make up the AgriFest experience. The moment you walk through the gates, you're greeted warmly by the sights

and smells of the island. Visitors and locals both young and old can be seen strolling the fairgrounds in search of all things local. Attendees can visit the main exhibition hall on the west side of the fairgrounds where the farmers market is housed. Browse an assortment of fruits, vegetables, herbs, spices, and a variety of plants for sale. Here, you'll also see a number of exhibits sponsored by local schools, youth groups, and the U.S. and V.I. Departments of Agriculture.

Dale Brown of Sejah Farm says the fair is an additional market for exposure for local farmers and those participating welcome it.

"Using the fairgrounds for keeping and showcasing the farming community is so important," says Dale. "AgriFest is an event that also assists in keeping agricultural farming as a viable entity on



Handmade items



Brightly colored calabashes



Vintage autos



Exhibitors



Crafts on display



A craft maker

St. Croix. Right now, it's not looked at as much but at that time of the year, people are looking at the agriculture and farming community, recognizing the possibilities and potential to develop the industry in St. Croix and in the Virgin Islands."

In addition to the locally grown produce and food, there is no shortage of fun activities for the family. Visit the livestock exhibits for a quick look at some of the island's well-known animals including cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, chickens, ducks, rabbits, and even peacocks. The kids can have a little fun in the petting zoo, ride a donkey, or hop on one of the carnival rides. Each day of AgriFest welcomes local musicians performing throughout the day as well as different informational booths educating attendees on a variety of agriculture-focused topics.

"This is a true Virgin Islands reunion," says V.I. Department of Agriculture Commissioner Positive T.A. Nelson. "This is where you see it all—our traditions, our food, and our people."

Head to the main pavilion for a fill of local delicacies like kallaloo, red peas soup, roast pork, and salmon balls. Choose from a number of local drinks such as sorrel, limeade, ginger beer, carambola, or maubi. Enjoy cultural performances from traditional stilt dancers called moko jumbies and see the official dance of the U.S. Virgin Islands, quadrille.

"If you're looking for true V.I. culture, this is the place where you can get it all in three days," says Nelson.



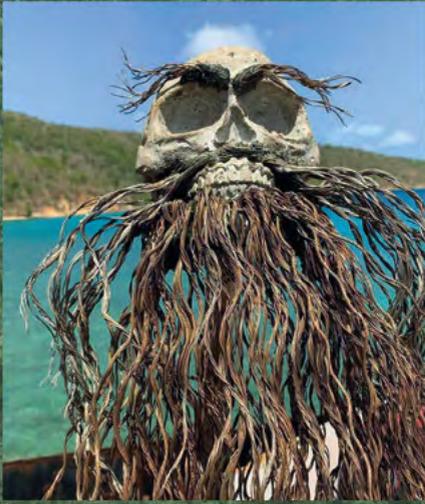
The crowd browses local wares



The BVI's got that sinking feeling, and it's all for a good cause. It started in 2017 with the intentional sinking of the *Kodiak Queen*, a small fuel tanker that survived the bombing of Pearl Harbor and was crafted into a kraken tentacle-laden work of art before being sent to the sea floor off Virgin Gorda. Known as the BVI Art Reef, this unique dive site is encouraging coral growth and provides a fish habitat. Building off this project's success, local nonprofit Beyond The Reef set its sights on three airplanes and another ship—the legendary floating bar the *Willy T*, which was destroyed during 2017's Hurricane Irma.

Going Down

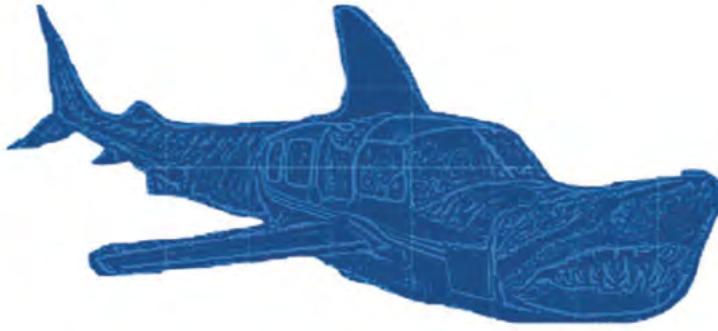




The *Willy T* was transformed into an underwater pirate ship playground, complete with a mermaid skeleton figurehead, and sunk off Peter Island in August 2019. Once a destination for debauchorous day-trippers, the *Willy T* now attracts divers seeking to explore this curious interactive underwater site. Beyond The Reef also retrofitted three derelict airplanes with shark faces into creations they've dubbed "sharkplaneos." The bull shark, black tip reef shark, and hammerhead shark airplanes, located in a colorful coral garden, aim to generate positive awareness for the necessity of sharks in local waters. A coral archway garden made from recycled mooring lines joins these curious creations at the bottom of the ocean.

In addition to fostering coral growth and raising awareness of some of the issues facing the ocean today, the \$5 donation Beyond The Reef requests of every diver who enjoys these sites is expected to fund swimming lessons for every child in the BVI within 10 years. Not a diver? No problem. Some of these sites, the shark airplanes in particular, can be viewed from the surface with only a mask and snorkel. Come explore some of the most wondrous dive sites in the region and feel good about doing it. For more information, find Beyond The Reef on Facebook.





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British Virgin Islands



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"The average property in the BVI sits on the market for about a year and a half," says RE/MAX Best Priced Properties owner Rico Garcia. "We are very proud to say that our exclusive listings normally sell within eight months, which is far less than the industry's standard. Our team is made up of Rico Garcia, Joycelyn Garcia, Cassie Ngai, and Kayleigh Ryan. When buying property, we can help you with every step of the ownership process, from identifying a property of interest to managing your property and finding you long- or short-term tenants. We have the BVI's strongest residential rental presence."



RE/MAX Best Priced Properties is an award-winning real estate brokerage in the beautiful British Virgin Islands. The BVI is the premier location in the Caribbean for sailing, diving, and luxurious vacation rentals. This British Overseas Territory has one of the strongest economies in the Caribbean due to its world-renowned offshore financial sector. The combination of a \$1 billion GDP, a population of 40,000, and the country's natural, untampered beauty reflects richly in the property market.

The average property for sale in the BVI is around \$1.1 million. Every year, fewer than 50 properties with prices above \$500,000 are sold in the BVI.

There are normally less than 200 properties for sale every year. Most buyers who have bought BVI property enjoy its steady, long-term appreciation along with its very attractive vacation rental income. Properties in the BVI can expect

to see anywhere from \$30,000 per year to \$400,000 per year in vacation rental income. Property values are always on the rise as supply and demand rule the economy of the BVI real estate market.

BVI real estate makes for a very attractive wealth machine as the property taxes are nominal, just \$10 on the first acre or part thereof for land owned by a British Virgin

Islander or a BVI company, with \$3 on each additional full or partial acre; \$50 per half acre or less and \$150 for land larger than a half acre but smaller than one

acre owned by an expatriate, with \$50 on each additional acre or part thereof; and 1 to 1.5 percent of a home's annual income value. The BVI has no capital gains tax, profit tax, dividends tax, or gift tax. There is a small 10 percent tax on income that is split between the employer and the employee. RE/MAX Best Priced Properties has moved away from the traditionally overpriced Caribbean property, making a name for itself with fast sales and fair pricing.





Her Majesty's Own: The British Virgin Islands

Dream of over sixty islands and cays and unique geological structures, floating in the azure waters of the northern Caribbean Sea. The British Virgin Islands offers a rich history, distinct culture and the unique opportunity to island-hop and visit several deliciously different islands in the span of a day, a week, a month or a lifetime.



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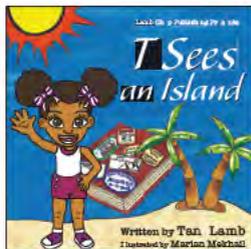
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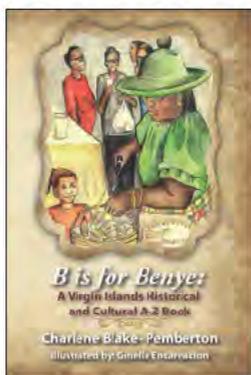
By Opal Palmer Adisa

Some arrive on cruise ships, some come by plane, but one thing all young travelers have in common is their delight at being on an island. Swimming in the warm Caribbean sea they will see many different fish, explore seashells on the shores, and build sandcastles on the pristine beaches. Books that teach children travelers about the place and culture they are visiting are great educational tools, as well as fun ways to engage young travelers. The vibrant colors of the Caribbean, its rhythmic sway, its sweets, fruits, and pastries, its pulsing music and unique culture are often captured in books that will delight children as much as days spent on the beach.



Get your children excited about their upcoming journey by reading “T Sees an Island” before your trip. Written by Tani Lamb and illustrated by Marian Mekhail, this book introduces an imaginary journey to the Virgin Islands, with a primary focus on the common fish and sea life that children and adults will see while snorkeling. The story begins in St. Thomas, but quickly moves to St. Croix as a moko jumbie, who is referred to as a giant on stilts, suggests the young friends, who hail from Kentucky, visit that island. Tani says she was inspired to write the story after visiting the Virgin Islands.

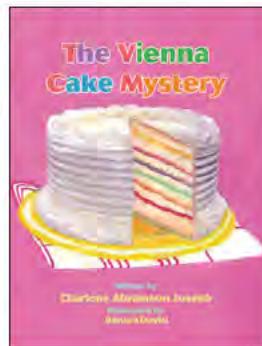
“I enjoyed the friendliness of the people and the island vibe, and was extremely fascinated with the history and lore of the moko jumbie,” she says.



The impetus behind Charlene Blake-Pemberton’s “B is for Benye: Virgin Islands Historical and Cultural A-Z Book” is to know and celebrate your history and culture.

“It began when I realized that my high school juniors had never tasted this sweet cultural banana pastry,” says Charlene, a retired teacher. “I want children of the Virgin Islands to learn about their roots and the contributions of many important Virgin islanders.”

A historical book, this story is told in a conversational format by parents who no longer live in the Virgin Islands, but who share their cultural traditions with their children. Readers learn how to make a benye as well as about Melvin Herbert Evans, a medical doctor who became the first elected governor of the V.I. in 1970. The book uses the alphabet to provide



“The Vienna Cake Mystery” by Charlene Abramson Joseph, illustrated by Danica David, introduces young readers to the “official” cake of St. Croix. The characters are local animals—a turtle, mongoose, hen, and Bro Goat.

“The character Bro Goat was a tribute to my father who herded goats in the rainforest for 40 years,” says Charlene. “This story is for my children and grandchildren, to leave a legacy of storytelling.”

This story explores honesty, forgiveness, and a community of friends sharing whatever they have.

“The book teaches that you cannot hide dishonest actions,” says Charlene. “People must take responsibility for poor choices and apologize. Finally, everyone deserves forgiveness.”

essential information on the food, culture, and people who contributed to this rich history in an engaging manner. It leaves room for those readers whose interest might be piqued to research more about important Virgin Islanders and their diverse culture.





I wrote "Look! A Moko Jumbie" and "Dance Quadrille and Play Quelbe," both illustrated by Christa-Ann Davis Molloy, to celebrate Virgin Islands culture, like the moko jumbie tradition that's rooted in V.I. ancestry. "Look! A Moko Jumbie" features the journey of Bamidele, who seeks to find out who or what moko jumbies are by asking his parents, his teacher, his friends, and finally his grandfather whether or not moko jumbies are "good" or should be feared.

I wrote this story after noticing that some young children are fearful of these tall, masked figures that are present at all cultural events in St. Croix. I wanted them to learn about the role and significance of moko jumbies in their culture.

Similarly, "Dance Quadrille and Play Quelbe" showcases the national dance and music of the Virgin Islands. It highlights the important roles that young people, illustrated in the book by siblings Jasmine and Justin, must play in preserving their cultural heritage through participation in specific activities. The story also incorporates the living culture bearers who are known in St. Croix for ensuring that these traditions continue. Replete with local food and cultural terms that might be unfamiliar to non-Virgin Islanders, the book provides a glossary of terms so readers can be grounded in the cultural milieu.

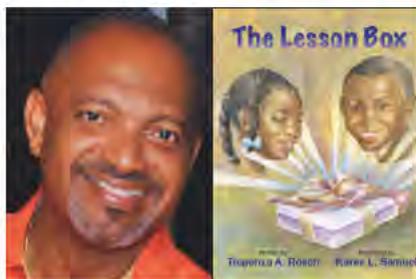
I know that many children love to dance, and some play instruments at schools, so I wanted children to understand the role they play in celebrating and preserving their culture.

In both stories, family and community, which are core values in St. Croix, play a central role.

Implicit in knowing your culture is practicing the values and norms of the community, and in Tregenza Roach's "The Lesson Box," young readers have the opportunity to do just this. Illustrated by St. Johnian artist Karen Samuel, the story is a mystery that focuses on decision-making and adhering to or departing from basic values with which many children will grapple. The book does not take an easy route, but rather takes readers through the pros and cons of making decisions. It is a wonderful journey in exploring curiosity, applying critical thinking skills, and listening to each other as Rebecca and her friend Khalid must do when they find a shiny box that appears out of nowhere.

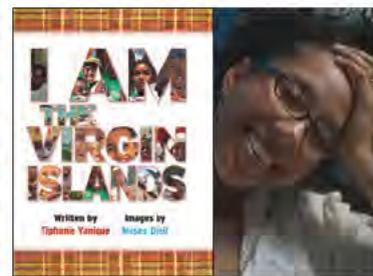
"Even the so-called good children sometimes deviate from the lessons you try to teach them, but that doesn't make them bad; it just makes them human," says Tregenza. "So the story invites us to look at how we allow children to think about transgressions and how to correct them."

The book also highlights the importance of understanding and appreciating your culture.



Two other books worthy of mention are "Efa and the Mosquito" and "Moko Jumbi Dreams," both by Alscess Lewis-Brown and artfully illustrated by Cynthia Hatfield. The first tells the story of Efe, a bright girl who goes on an adventure with a special mosquito and her fun-searching musical family. The latter speaks to coping skills with a pending hurricane,

Although intended for children, these books are sure to also be enjoyed by adults, who will learn a great deal about the history and culture of the Virgin Islands. All of the books depict universal values such as kindness, curiosity, respect, collaboration, and the importance of family. Each is colorfully illustrated and portrays the people, landscape, and fauna of this beautiful region. These books not only introduce young readers to the region, but will help them expand on what they see and experience during their visit to the V.I.



"I am the Virgin Islands" is a first-person poem by award-winning poet and writer Tiphane Yanique that encourages readers to step into what it means to be a Virgin Islander by taking them to various sites, primarily in St. Thomas. The photo collages by Moses Djeli greatly add to this rhythmic text that seeks to imprint the place and sensibilities of this multi-cultural place on young readers, making them take ownership of this cultural journey.

"It was inspired by my need to do the work of cultural self-determination on a creative level," says Tiphane. "The only way a people can know who they are, know indeed that they even really exist, is if they have various and nuanced representations of themselves created by themselves."

This poetic book provides a glossary and a guide on how to create "I am" projects that prove to be fun for parents and children before, after, or during their visit to the V.I.

loss of friendship when a friend moves away, and also dreaming to become a moko jumbie majorette participating in carnival events. This story, set in St. Croix, illustrates the importance of persistence and determination while focusing on a girl venturing into a skill not commonly associated with girls—dancing on stilts.

B Ste zer



winds of inspiration

By Judi Shimel

The 2017 twin hurricane disasters of Irma and Maria left behind a battered and broken landscape, but the storms also caused damage of a less visible nature. The traumatic experience left emotional scars that still linger. As life began to return to a semblance of normalcy in the months after the hurricanes, some residents sought to heal themselves and their fellow community members through various creative pursuits.

One instrument of healing that was used—puppets. St. Thomas mental health professional Joan Bennett revived Iggi the Iguana, a character who first came to life in a production created in the aftermath of Hurricane Marilyn, which devastated the V.I. in 1995. Iggi, whose tale sees him facing losses similar to those experienced by the territory's residents, is left without the means to express his feelings when his friend, a young child, shuts down due to the trauma he experienced. Iggi seeks counsel from Ivan the Wise, a much older iguana who encourages the young iguana to shift the focus on his problems and reframe them as part of a whole.

Joan also partnered with fellow St. Thomas mental health professional Anne Nayer for an eight-week workshop of dance, yoga, dramatic performance, music, and puppet making.

"What part of it was healing?" asks Anne. "All of it. The dance was a post-hurricane dance, and yoga was involved in helping the kids learn to calm down, to find a peaceful place in a stressful time."

"The kids got to talk about what they were going through during the storms while they were making the puppets and putting on the show," says Anne.



Joan Bennett

The program was supported by Pistarckle Theater and the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, and was eventually taken into local schools, community groups, and Head Start centers, providing outreach to hundreds of children who were affected by the storms.

Well-established individual artists tapped into their creativity as a means of healing. St. John artist Janet Cook-Rutnik gathered books and household items strewn about by the winds and gave them



W.B. Thompson

new life by painting designs and using them in three-dimensional installations. Internationally recognized painter W.B. Thompson displayed vibrant new works at St. Thomas's Mango Tango Art Gallery. The series, titled "Unbroken Territory," combines depictions of a punished landscape with bright colors, inspiring feelings of hope and better days ahead.

"I wanted to make paintings that refer or relate to the devastation and power of the sea and sky, but still retain the beauty that shines throughout our islands in spite of the turmoil and troubles," says the artist.



Joan Bennett



Priscilla Hintz



Priscilla Hintz



Priscilla Hintz



B Ste zer

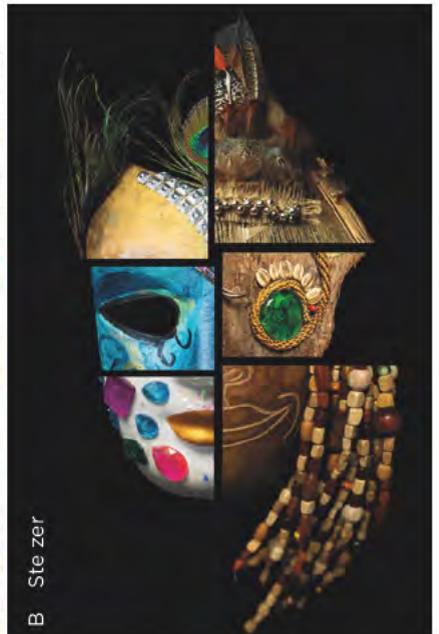
One artistic pursuit sought to bring healing to residents young and old, from those with no artistic inclinations to talented creatives. More than 500 people participated in the Mask Making as a Tool for Community Expression and Healing in the Aftermath of the 2017 Hurricane Season project, initiated by the St. John Arts and Cultural Recovery Committee, made up of representatives from the St. John Community Foundation, St. John School of the Arts, St. JanCO, and the Gri Gri Project. The formation of this committee was inspired by a visiting

recovery specialist with the National Endowment for the Arts-sponsored Creative Forces Program, which allows military personnel returning home from overseas conflicts to make masks as expressions of trauma, pain, and patriotism.

Bajo El Sol Gallery and Art Bar owners David Knight and Priscilla Hintz, who co-chaired the STJACRC with St. Johnian Kurt Marsh Jr., hosted several of the mask-making workshops at the gallery. They also curated two group shows with hurricane-inspired works by various local artists.



B Ste zer



B Ste zer



“We got to thinking that a lot of the stress and anxiety we’re facing is very similar to PTSD.”

says Priscilla. “We wondered, how could we take that project and emulate it in a way that helps our community.”

Hintz said she saw children and adults find a moment to breathe as they came together at long tables covered with mask-making materials and focused on their individual mask designs. Pop up mask-making workshops appeared at numerous public events, increasing the project’s outreach.

“Participants were encouraged to imagine new identities, new selves, new ways of being in the storms’ aftermath,” says Priscilla. “The masks were displayed as a temporary public art project around the island during the St. John Festival season.”

A selection of 45 masks were displayed at the U.S. Department of the Interior Library in Washington D.C. in 2018, and a documentary film and book about the project are in the works.



The V.I.'s thriving art scene

Take an art crawl and discover a work that speaks to you

By Anna Fleck

While swimming, boating, hiking, or dining in the islands, visitors can truly relax. One of the greatest pleasures of traveling to the Caribbean lies in the islands' casual nature. When looking for a work of art to capture the spirit of your visit, there are many fine art galleries as well as less formal venues where you can select the perfect Virgin Islands memento.



Trunk Bay photograph by John Baldwin, Sugar Birds

ST. JOHN

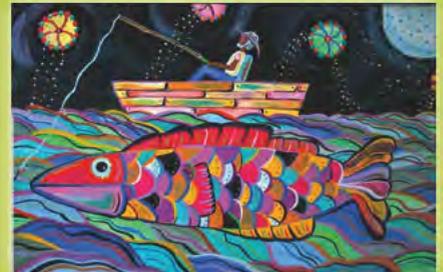
Two locales in Mongoose Junction offer art. The owners of **Sugar Birds**, Dean and John Baldwin, offer their award-winning photography of sea life and seascapes in small to large format on paper, canvas, and gift items.

In the courtyard, **Bajo el Sol Gallery & Art Bar** provides thought-provoking art to enjoy with wine or coffee. The gallery emphasizes the importance of history and culture through books and workshops. Themed shows and events happen regularly throughout the year.

Across from the ferry dock, **Island Dream Worx** showcases stellar artisan jewelry as well as Virgin Islands art.

For three decades, **Pink Papaya**, next to the Lime Inn, has continued to please clients by offering licensed art products, originals, and prints by many artists, including Pauline Walsh Jacobson and Lisa Etre.

ST. THOMAS



Moonlight Fishing by Robbin Robertson from Fish Face

On upper Main Street, Zora the sandal maker's shop also houses the **Art Gallery and Emporium**, which showcases the work of Zora's daughters—dynamic paintings by Shansi Miller and engaging jewelry by Timisa. Also on display are oil, clay, acrylic, and pencil works by other local artists.

Fish Face, located in inviting Palm Passage, offers the stunning underwater photography of owner Kristin Wall, complemented by the work of eight new artists, including copper sculpture by famed Aragorn of the British Virgin Islands and colorful and whimsical paintings and prints by Robbin Robertson.

Island Art Studio, just east of downtown at 5 Kongens Gade, is open by appointment. Four artists create intriguing paintings and pastels.

Close to the synagogue, artists **Vincent Bambini and Ellen Swane** are masters of contemporary art.

Outside town on Route 38, **Mango Tango Art Gallery** showcases the work of emerging and established artists.

Seeking art may be the highlight of your trip. You will have a reminder of your visit to the tropics and the artist will have a new patron who has invested in his or her creativity. Quite simply, the art spirit of the islands might joyously spirit you away. Let your adventure begin.



Ceramic platter by Lisa Etre, Pink Papaya

Just past Gallows Point Resort, **Coconut Coast Studio** features the creativity of gallery owner artist Elaine Estern in watercolors, limited edition prints, and gift items.

Kimberly Boulon Fine Art, on the second floor of The Marketplace, displays traditional and contemporary paintings by the talented owner, complemented by the work of notable ceramicists.

- Sugar Birds** 340-776-6909
www.sugarbirds.net
- Bajo el Sol Gallery** 340-693-7070
https://bajo-el-sol-gallery.business.site
- Island Dream Worx** 877-249-9679
Facebook: Island Dream Worx
- Pink Papaya** 340-693- 8535
www.pinkpapaya.com
- Coconut Coast Studio** 340-776-6944
www.coconutcoaststudios.com
- Kimberly Boulon Fine Art**
340-693-8524, www.kimberlyboulon.com
- Art Gallery and Emporium** 340-774-2559
www.zoracustomsandals.com
- Fish Face** 340-775-5129, fishfacevi.com
- Island Art Studio**
340-998-0135/340-998-4423
- Vincent Bambini and Ellen Swane**
340-514-1200
- Mango Tango Art Gallery** 340-777-3060
www.mangotangoart.com



Jessica Rosenberg

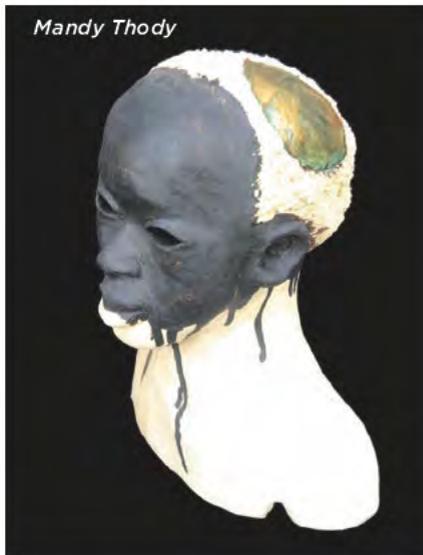


Brenda Sylvia



ART GALLERY
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Mango Tango has been encouraging artists to take risks for more than 30 years. Enjoy the dynamic original paintings of Don Dahlke, Shari Erickson, Mel McCuddin, Brenda Sylvia, and W.B. Thompson, as well as a vast selection of tropical prints. Find a treasure trove of ceramics by Mandy Thody and Jessica Rosenberg and discover the creativity of Haitian and African artisans at the breezy art gallery on Raphune Hill.



Mandy Thody



Don Dahlke

Mango Tango
4003 Raphune Hill Road
340-777-3060
www.mangotangoart.com
mangotango3000@gmail.com
Open Monday through Saturday
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Eco Serendib Villa and Spa: Coming home to luxury in harmony with nature



Eco Serendib Villa and Spa
Point Rendezvous, St. John
215-620-8809
www.ecoserendib.com

Perched atop Point Rendezvous with vibrant, ever-changing views from Fish Bay to Ram Head, Eco Serendib Villa and Spa on St. John welcomes guests with gracious service, sumptuous accommodations, and one-of-a-kind experiences. Boasting five-star ratings from TripAdvisor and HomeAway, this eco-luxury private villa exudes tranquility and offers the finest services and amenities in a sustainable environment.

Green elements minimize the villa's carbon footprint without sacrificing the guest experience. Just one reservation is accepted at a time, so guests have exclusive use of the retreat whether booking one, two, or all eight guest suites. It is the perfect venue for intimate weddings, family reunions, girls' getaways, corporate retreats, and romantic escapes.

To ensure compliance with USVI's new toxic sunscreen ban, a dispenser with safe, non-nano Sea2Stream sunscreen has been installed poolside. Additional amenities include a Life Fitness gym, salt water pool, Bullfrog hot tub, Sub Zero/Wolf gourmet appliances, table tennis, life size chess, baby grand piano, and a presidential suite unlike any other. Thoughtful touches such as individualized turndown service, Frette bathrobes, daily maid service, and a dedicated villa concierge ensure an experience to remember. Sustainability and green travel are top-of-mind to travelers and the industry alike but few have made the commitment of Eco Serendib Villa and Spa, which has contributed upward of \$100,000 to local causes such as Friends of V.I. National Park, Giffitt Hill School, and Island Green Living Association. Conceived by award-winning visionary Harith Wickrema with the mission to give back to the community and protect the environment, Eco Serendib will donate a minimum of \$250 per night booked and has pledged to match guest contributions to Island Green Living, a local non-profit dedicated to sustainability, where Wickrema serves as President.

"Once again, we had the time of our lives and will appreciate the memories forever," said a recent guest.

There is nothing more gratifying than feedback like this from returning visitors.

One of Eco Serendib's crowning amenities is the private spa, featuring steam shower, infrared sauna and the finest organic products.

Eco Serendib's list of luxuries includes optional butler-style service, spa treatments, Pilates instruction or yoga, and tantalizing gourmet cuisine. A favorite is the signature "seed to plate" epicurean experience, whereby guests are "edutained" with a private chef demonstration incorporating fresh organic produce and herbs grown in advance according to the guest's preferences at the onsite garden. You'll learn horticultural and culinary skills you will continue to enjoy long after returning from paradise.



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