



# My Beautiful Belize

V I S I T O R G U I D E

| JANUARY 2017 | VOL. 05 #01 | FREE |

**The Year of Adventure!**

*Make 2017 in Belize  
the most exciting yet!*



# From the Editor *Tamara Sniffin*



Welcome 2017! Each new year usually comes with a handful of resolutions where we are determined to make positive changes in our lives. Be it losing weight, saving more money, finding a new job or dumping that dead-beat boyfriend, we all have them. Even My Beautiful Belize has made a new year's resolution; we are determined to make 2017 the year of adventure! Are you with us?!

The great thing about adventure is, it's more a way of life, rather than something you must look for. Things as simple as trying

a new restaurant can be exciting, if not for the establishment then why not try a dish you've never savored before? You don't even have to leave your home town to do that!

While visiting Belize, you will have a smorgasbord of adventures to choose from! In this January issue of My Beautiful Belize we explore just a few of the many our country has to offer. Be it as easy as cheering for crabs at a crab race (bet you never did that before), or jumping out of a perfectly good airplane (have you done THAT before?), or what about swimming with sharks, oh my! In Belize, your adventure can be as low-key or as grand as you dare.

As you explore our gorgeous country we wish you dream-come-true adventures and life-long memories. Welcome to My Beautiful Belize!

## Where Do You Read My Beautiful Belize?



**Bruce Thomas** owner of Feliz Bar & Grill reads his copy of *My Beautiful Belize* in **Sydney, Australia!**

*Pictured in the background is the famous Sydney Opera House, a multi-venue performing arts center and one of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's most famous and distinctive buildings.*

Email your pictures to: [hello@mybeautifulbelize.com](mailto:hello@mybeautifulbelize.com)  
Photos in unique places and locations are welcome!

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Be sure to visit our website for detailed stories and many more beautiful photos: [www.mybeautifulbelize.com](http://www.mybeautifulbelize.com)

Published by The San Pedro Sun LTD.



## Here's what's happening in January!!

**January 8<sup>th</sup>** – Fitness and wellness Retreat with Eva Redpath at Robert's Grove in **Placencia** starting at 11PM

**January 13<sup>th</sup>** – National Elite Basketball League kick off at the Belize Elementary School Auditorium in **Belize City**, 7PM

**January 14<sup>th</sup>** – ASA Group Sailing Class at Belize Sailing Vacation in **Belize City** (more info at [marketing@belizesailingvacations.com](mailto:marketing@belizesailingvacations.com))

**January 14<sup>th</sup>** – Mahogany Bay Market Day at Mahogany Bay Village in **San Pedro Town** from 11AM (free)



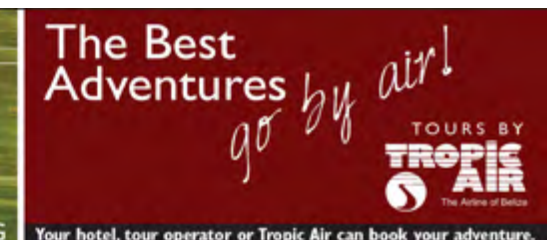
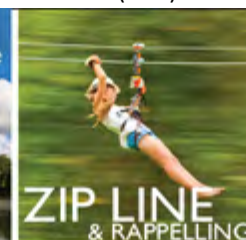
**January 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>** – Belize Electronic Music Festival at **Placencia Peninsula** (more info at [info@sisimito.com](mailto:info@sisimito.com))

**January 28<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>** Annual Bob Marley Tribute at the Muffles College Auditorium in **Orange Walk Town** from 6PM

## February:

**February 4<sup>th</sup>** – Belize Wedding Expo at the Belize Biltmore Plaza in **Belize City** from 9PM

**February 4<sup>th</sup>** – BBQ Cookoff at Estel's Dine by the Sea in **San Pedro Town** from 10AM





# Skydive San Pedro - Thrills and Adventure on La Isla Bonita!

By Mary Gonzalez



Years ago, I was over the weight limit to even think about jumping out of a plane, with or without a parachute attached. I was also quite terrified of a lot of things and didn't think myself capable - my confidence levels were certainly NOT what they are today. My initial desire to skydive was all about reckless abandon—a daredevil, not-fully-thought-out plan to defy gravity and look fear straight in the eye. Being unable to jump back then, the idea of skydiving joined the list of the many things I would do...someday.

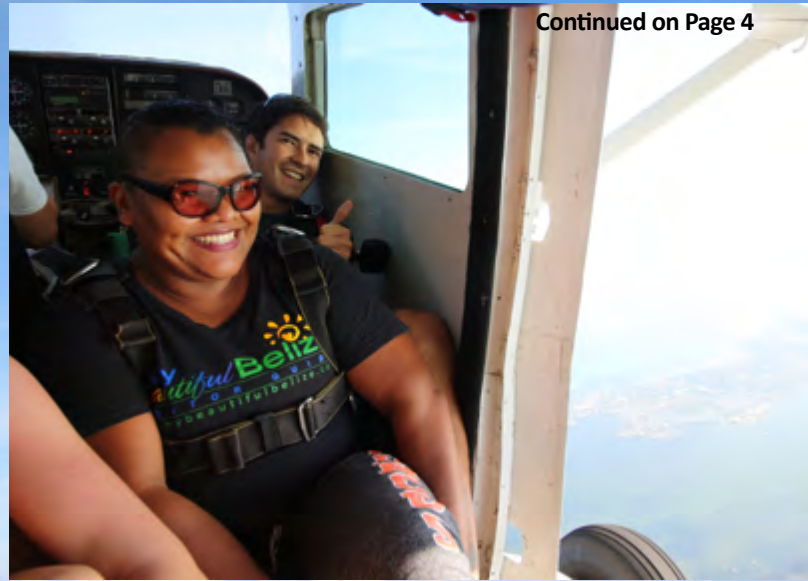
Well, that day arrived on December 15, 2016, and this time, I took on the challenge from a completely different perspective. I am more aware than ever how fleeting life can be, and that while I am capable of doing incredible things, I am a mere mortal. I also value my life completely, especially being able to land on solid ground unscathed. However, I needed to reset my mind, and so I jumped.

I had been waiting nearly four days to do the jump. With each passing day, I wondered if the winds and rain that delayed my jump were signs...but that glorious Thursday burst forth beautifully, and any qualms I had were to be squashed completely:

*My husband will kill me...wait, no...he loves me...he totally put a ring on it...*

*Should I write my will? Stop being such a pessimist...you'll be fine... Maybe it will start raining before you have to jump...Yeah, no, it's hot as heck...and winds are dying down...now or never baby...*

Continued on Page 4





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Mondays 8pm: Live Reggae  
Tuesdays 6:30pm: Hermit Crab Races & Live Music  
Wednesdays 4pm: Live Island-Style Music  
Thursdays 2pm: Paint 'n Splash  
4pm: Live Music (Rock 'n Roll)  
Fridays 7pm: Trivia & Karaoke (8:30pm)

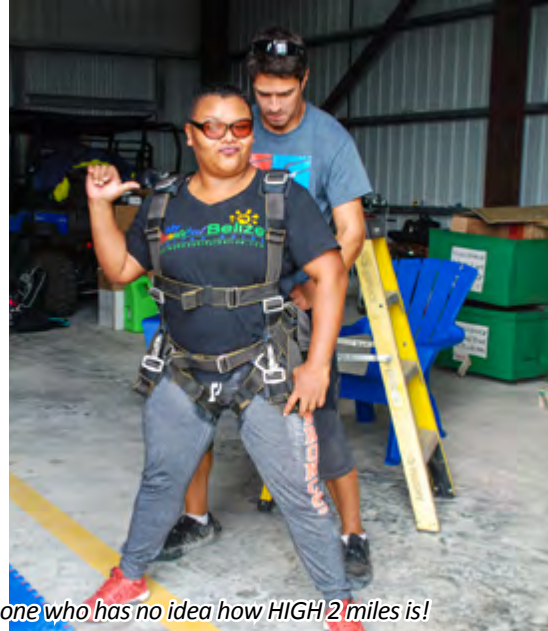
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The look of confidence...maybe some nerves...then one of "I got this"...clearly, the look of someone who has no idea how HIGH 2 miles is!

## Skydive San Pedro Continued from Page 3

2PM arrived and I made my way to the Skydive San Pedro dock, anxious to meet company owner Abby Nawrocki. She and I had communicated for over a week, trying to set me up for the thrill of a lifetime. I finally was able to put face to name, and in the process, met Max Lesziak, my tandem instructor, and Rich SirVato, videographer and photographer extraordinaire. I was accompanied by co-worker Chelsea, who had a case of the butterflies too... especially when I had to fill in the

release form!

After signing my life away and giving them the all-clear, it was time to get on the golf cart to the hangar, where a plane awaited (with a whole side panel missing OH MY GOD!). Max strapped me in, making sure all safety harnesses were on perfectly snug. As he did so, he explained a few things, giving me some instructions, but not going too far ahead – smart move. Do not. Overwhelm. The jumper.

After the requisite pose by the plane, answering questions for video, Pilot Rocky Rivero got in, and it was time for us to go up...and up...and up...a total of 12,000 feet high. We were heading two-plus miles in the air, where according to Rich and Max, the temperatures would be

cooler and the air thinner. I remember the release form asking about shortness of breath...eek!

We crammed into the plane, six people total, including two daring solo jumpers, Max, Rich, Rocky and myself. After buckling in for safety - you know, since the plane was kind of open air – we began the ascent. We hit the glorious spot over the water, where the magnificent reef lay resplendent. Catamarans and boats dotted the blue seas, waves crashed against the coral reef barrier, and slowly, the island's outline began to show. We were getting higher for sure...

Max gave me a few more instructions, and that is where I learned that I would be the first one out of the plane, basically carrying him with me. Gulp.

He told me what position to be in at the jump, and what would be the next couple of steps once in the air...a few more brief moments of respite and then it was time to put up or shut up.

I watched the solo jumpers make their way out and tumble with ease into the abyss below. I took a few calming breaths (didn't work) and then it was my turn. Rich, the amazing acrobat that he is, dangled from one hand and leg sideways from the plane catching my moment of...triumph?...let's go with triumph! My legs swung over the side of the plane and almost immediately, my limbs were fluttering about like they weren't attached to me. One more big breath, crossing my arms across my chest like Max asked, and it was go time.

**And then I jumped.**

**Continued on Page 5**



I marveled at the sight below. Hues of blue not found in the crayon box made up the Caribbean Sea.





*"I am more aware than ever how fleeting life can be...while I am capable of doing incredible things, I am a mere mortal who values life completely...now, more than ever."*

## Skydive San Pedro Continued from Page 4

There are not enough words to accurately describe that feeling of complete and utter incredulousness and heightened sense of self-awareness. Was it terrifying? Absolutely – for about 20 seconds after I left the relative safety of a seatbelt and the plane, hurtling down towards the ground, there was a moment of, *"what if?"* I can guarantee my eyes were tightly closed for that free-fall!

But then I felt the tug of the parachute, and before I could even brace myself, the safety harnesses kicked in and I was jolted back to reality by the tightly secured harness - phew!

From then on, it was pure adrenaline-fueled yelps of delight. As the parachute fluttered in the hard breeze, and cold wind whipped my cheeks back, I marveled at the sight below. Hues of blue not found in the crayon box made up the Caribbean Sea. In the distance I could see the white crest of the waves breaking over the reef, and directly below, development, mangroves, patches of wooded land, and more blues and greens of the water that surrounds us.

Next to us, Rich was cool as a cucumber, taking more pictures and videos like the talented daredevil he was.

**Continued on Page 4**

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*The first thing I notice is my death grip on Rich's hand!*

## Skydive San Pedro

Continued from Page 5

That's not to take away from Max, who had to deal with my shrieks (of both terror and delight). Together, we played with the 'chute, turning and twirling as we descended. He was brilliant at breaking down instructions a little at a time, giving me a chance to enjoy the airtime before we had to float back down to land.

It was a classic landing, perfect in every way, and when my heart stopped racing, I could finally soak it in. That jump was worth the wait, and I absolutely would do it again!

To book your very own jump, call 226 5302, email info@skydivesanpedro.com, or just stop by their office located on the dock across from Sandbar Hostel. Tandem jumps are \$219usd - and well worth it! Let us know if you do it!



*Bold solo jumpers...look at the open side of the plane!*



*Thank you Rich (left) and Max, for a fantastic, once-in-a-lifetime experience!*



# ACQUAFINO™

## ISLAND RESORT AND SPA



Located just 5 minutes behind the bustling village of San Pedro, Acquafino offers a true 5 star experience with "on demand" luxury transportation to and from San Pedro with your own exclusive speed boat.

This island resort has a private gym, beach club with infinity pool and a man made fully stocked internal waterway system where you can catch fish outside your front steps. The Acqua Villa collection consists of approximately 1800 sqft of gorgeous Belizean hardwood finishes, a plunge pool and has 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms.

Ownership is by invitation only, please inquire for more information.

Contact us for your own private appointment.



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# Crab Races at Crazy Canucks is island fun for a worthy cause!

By Janelle Cowo

On an island as busy as San Pedro, visitors and locals alike are often searching for a fun activity every night of the week. Tuesday is kind of an odd day in the week – it doesn't have that weekend 'party-till-you-drop' feel, but it's much better than the Monday 'blues'. So, if you are looking for some excitement to a Tuesday night, how about a crab race?

Intrigued? Then we have just the spot for you! Every Tuesday night, Crazy Canucks Beach Bar holds their Hermit Crab Race. With a chance to win fabulous prizes, the place gets jammed pack with patrons cheering on the competitors, little bitty hermit crabs.

For just \$10BZ you can bet on a hermit crab of your choice. Owners Rob and Krista have an aquarium filled with these little crustaceans ready to take to the track. As for the track – well, it's more like a circular obstacle course, with ropes used to divide it into two segments. Items signifying the prizes up for action are placed within the course, and the first crab to crawl to each item takes the winnings!

## The first hermit crab to crawl to each item on the obstacle course takes the winnings!



As if the crab races aren't fun enough, proceeds of the event go to charity – a real win-win situation! There are several races during the night, but crabs sell out quickly, so we recommend you get there early, and bet on a crab or two, or three!

If you are not in town during a Tuesday, we still recommend visiting Crazy Canucks. It's just one of those bars where you are sure to have a good time! Their Sunday Fundays, with horse shoe games and live music, is one of the most popular weekly events on the island too!

Crazy Canucks is located on Coconut Drive, on the beach of Exotic Caye Resort. The bar is open every day of the week from 11AM to midnight with tasty food option served up to 10PM.





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JOSE LUIS ZAIPETA  
PHOTOGRAPHY





## EAT



### PIRATE'S TREASURE

- A unique dining experience with their Chef's Table. Watch as Chef Mar prepares a fresh 3-course Belizean meal over a coconut-husk fire while you enjoy refreshing cocktails and island vibes. Regular Menu always available without reservations. Noon to 11PM. 668-2156.



### THE TRUCK STOP:

Belize's first shipping container food park. Come try the different exciting options from our food trucks, play backyard games, or cool off with a sundae from our ice cream shop. Pig roast & cornhole tournament every Sunday!



- Belizean Comfort Foods and Gourmet Seafood. One Mile North of the Bridge, at the island's only Yoga Center. Fresh, is the order of the day! Gourmet Dishes by Master Chef JoVannie Rowland, menu changes daily. Imported Wines, Seafood and Pasta. 7 days.

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**RAIN RESTAURANT** - 2 Miles North at Grand Caribe. Outdoor rooftop casual dining, world cuisine. Serving from 7AM - LATE! Happy Hour: 1-3PM, Mon-Sun. 226-4000 or email [reservations@rainbelize.com](mailto:reservations@rainbelize.com).

**PIRATE'S NOT SO SECRET BEACH BAR & GRILL:** The newest trending destination; adventure to SECRET BEACH! Soak up the sun or take a dip in crystal clear shallow waters accompanied with island music, refreshing cocktails, gourmet lunch menu by AWARD WINNING CHEF. Credit Cards Accepted. Open daily 10am to SUNSET!

**O RESTAURANT** - Central American cuisine with Caribbean flair, at Las Terrazas Resort. Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner. Casual chic, or dine alfresco next to the infinity pool. 226-4249.

**MAMBO RESTAURANT** - Enjoy a unique dining experience at this award-winning restaurant at Matancha Resort. Romantic atmosphere with island ambience, offering locally inspired flavors and meals that will excite even the most seasoned palate. Complimentary transportation with reservations - call 226-5010/226-5011.



### PORTOFINO RESTAURANT

- Enjoy our Euro-Caribbean inspired menu and spectacular Caribbean views. Also offering a full VEGETARIAN Menu. For Reservations & Free Transportation, please call 226-5096 or 678-5096.

## PLAY



**COCO LOCOS BEACH BAR:** 1st Beach Bar North of Bridge. Swim up Bar. Monday 4PM Cribbage Tournament and BBQ. Trivia Tuesdays 7PM. Daily Happy Hour 4 - 6. Bocce ball, Giant Jenga. Pizza & Pulled Pork Sandwiches. Open Every day 12 noon - 10PM. Like us on [facebook.com/cocolocosbz](https://www.facebook.com/cocolocosbz).



**FELIZ BAR & GRILL:** THE Sports Bar across the bridge, with four 43" flat screen TVs, delicious thin crust pizza, wings and burgers. Play corn hole, catch the game, and try our Wednesday dart challenge! 1PM-11PM, closed on Tuesdays. At the Cloisters.



**THE DIVE BAR:** Snorkel/dive with us at SeaStar Belize and then unwind over great drinks, great food and a great time at The Dive Bar. Enjoy beachfront views and complementary water toys, just 1/2 mile North of the bridge. 226-3365/625-3364



**MARBUCKS COFFEE HOUSE** - Specialty Coffee Drinks - both hot & cold; fresh fruit smoothies and baked goods. Join us for Thursday Wine Fun, 4PM-7PM and our delicious Sunday brunch (with mimosas!). Located just off the main road in Tres Cocos, before the Truck Stop. Like us on Facebook and keep up with the fun!



**THE GREEN PARROT** - Eats and treats. Relax on the patio, sip your favorite island drink gaze out at the azure Caribbean Sea, take a dip in the pool and enjoy our great beach bar. Friendly staff always on hand 6 miles north of town. Open daily from 9AM-9PM. For complimentary boat transportation please call 226-5096/ 678-5096.

## STAY

**AK'BOL YOGA RESORT** - Truly unique. Built in the cultural fashion, of old Belize. Seven beach cabanas on the island's most beautiful natural beaches. YOGA classes served up daily at 9AM, along with delicious Belizean cuisine, also vegetarian and fish dishes. Website: [akbol.com](http://akbol.com)

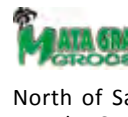
**BELIZEAN COVE ESTATES** A collection of six luxurious beachfront vacation rentals located 3 miles north of San Pedro Town. Each villa is elegantly decorated with its own unique style and décor. Belizean Cove Estates is the ideal setting for an intimate honeymoon, large family, or group vacation.

**COCO BEACH RESORT** 4-star luxury beach resort, nestled 3.5 miles north on Ambergris Caye, offering the utmost in beachfront relaxation, romance, luxury and adventure. Featuring two impressive free form swimming pools, a swim-up pool bar, an in-pool hot tub and a water-slide.

**BELIZEAN SHORES RESORT** An affordable vacation resort located just 3 miles north on the island of Ambergris Caye. Offering a great beachfront vacation for those looking to escape and relax in a peaceful island oasis yet, it's only a short boat ride away from San Pedro Town.

**X'TAN HA RESORT** "The Waterfront" Resort is a secluded getaway 7.2 miles north of San Pedro on a stretch of pristine white sandy beach with beautiful turquoise waters. The resort sits on one of the finest white sand beaches on the entire island of Ambergris Caye.

## SHOP



**MATA GRANDE GROCERY** The biggest little grocery store on Ambergris Caye, located 4.5 miles North of San Pedro Town, it's a must see! Open Monday-Saturday 8AM-5PM; Sunday 10AM-5PM. You can also order online at [www.matagrandegrocery.com](http://www.matagrandegrocery.com) or call us at 226-4290....we DELIVER!





## EATS & TREATS



**HURRICANE'S CEVICHE BAR & GRILL:** The ceviche house! Fine outdoor dining and delicious tropical drinks. Full lunch and dinner menu, seafood specials and pastas. Restaurant open 10am - 9:30pm. Bar open until 10pm Monday to Saturday, closed on Sundays. We also run Tanisha Eco-Tours – and the best Lamanai Tour in Belize! Call 226-2314.



**EL FOGON:** Authentic Belizean Cuisine prepared on a fire hearth. Featuring dishes that represent the diversity of our Belizean culture. Lunch menu and daily dinner specials. Open Mon. – Sat. 11AM – 9PM 206-2121/610-1277 See map for our location!



**FIDO'S COURTYARD:** Fun every day, starting with breakfast and a fabulous view under the island's largest palapa. Enjoy refreshing cocktails, lunches and dinners, with a side of live music. Island life doesn't get any better than this! Located in the heart of town on Barrier Reef Drive.



**SANDBAR:** BEST PIZZAS ON THE ISLAND! Sandbar hosts an amazing happy hour special: \$10BZD wood-fired pizzas and 2-for-1 rums on weekdays (3-6PM) and beer and wing specials on the weekend (11am-4pm). Enjoy your afternoon or evening at the bar, tables, or chaise lounges on the beach!

**ITZA BELIZEAN PLACE:** Serving up authentic Belizean and international breakfasts and lunch specials. Open from Tuesdays to Sundays from 6AM to 3PM. Located on Black Coral Street only minutes away from the beach. Contact: 637-8555.

**THE NOOK:** A restaurant and cocktail BARTique, offering fun fusion cocktails and tasty nibbles and main dishes. Happy Hour and a Half from 5PM - 6:30PM at the funky and relaxed lounge on the beach, by Coastal Express.

## PARTY PARTY



**WAHOO'S LOUNGE** - We are home to the WORLD FAMOUS CHICKEN DROP! Thursday nights starting at 6PM. Drink specials, games and an amazing view of the reef. Located on the beach at the Spindrift Hotel. 226-2002.

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## REAL ESTATE

**BELIZE SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY** is a full-service firm offering sales, vacation rentals, and property management in Belize (Ambergris Caye & Placencia Peninsula). We are service oriented and will ensure that our clients' needs are met and exceeded. [BelizeSir.com](http://BelizeSir.com)

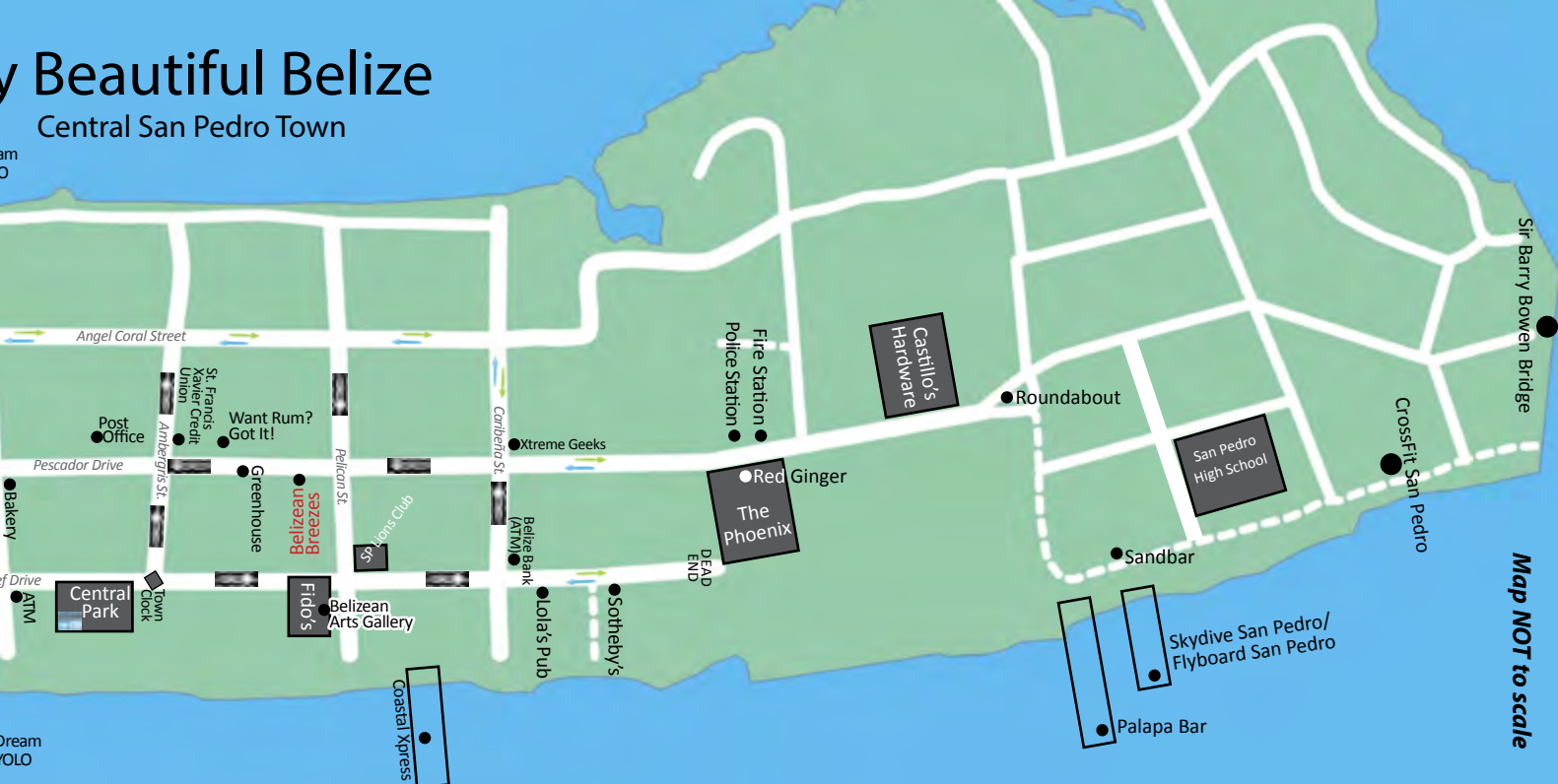


**SANDY POINT REAL ESTATE:** The exclusive real estate representative for Sandy Point Resorts. These luxurious beachfront vacation resorts on Ambergris Caye allow you to purchase your dream vacation home. They also offer a number of pre-construction projects underway that will offer tremendous market appreciation and great pre-construction pricing.



# My Beautiful Belize

## Central San Pedro Town



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**BELIZE CHOCOLATE COMPANY:** The first ever chocolate boutique in Belize, makes bean to bar chocolate on Ambergis Caye, together with delicious truffles, tasty hot and cold chocolate drinks and unique chocolate gifts. Located on Front Street. Call 226 3015.

**GRANIEL'S DREAMLAND:** Exotic Hard Woods and Mahogany Products made locally. Gift Items, indoor and outdoor furniture, carvings, and custom-made orders. Worldwide Shipping. Free Delivery to Hotel, Airport or Boat within town limits. 226-2938, Pescador Drive. granielsdreamland2@yahoo.com, www.granielsdreamlandbelize.com Facebook: Graniels Dreamland



**"12"** is the only shop in Belize that features only Belizean made luxury products & gifts suitable for both locals and tourists. Featuring exclusive items from around the country from soaps & scrubs to handbags & sauces, we ship same day throughout Belize. www.12belize.com 670-5272.

**BELIZEAN ARTS GALLERY** - Largest collection of paintings in Belize. Featuring contemporary, native and realistic works by leading and on the rise artists. Gold and silver artisan jewelry, ceramics, fabrics and more. Open daily 9am to 10pm. Deep inside Fido's Courtyard. 226-3019.

**MOHO CHOCOLATE COMPANY:** From bean to bar: handmade chocolate with Organic Maya Cacao. Milk & dark chocolate, truffles, skin care products and souvenirs. Black Coral Drive. 625-1980.

**ISLAND DREAM TOURS:** Specializing in Sunset Dinner Cruises (Gourmet, Buffet) Booze Cruise and Private Charters – you design your own dream on-the-water tour! Cruise includes wine, fresh fruits and hand-crafted cocktails! Join the Fun!! 615-9656! Like us on facebook.com/islanddreamtours

**FLYBOARD SAN PEDRO:** EXPERIENCE THE FREEDOM OF FLIGHT! Come fly with Flyboard San Pedro! Soar over the beautiful waters of the Caribbean in style! Experience the newest sport to hit San Pedro! Located at the Skydive San Pedro shop over the water across from Sandbar Hostel & Restaurant on the beach.

**AQUAFINO ISLAND RESORT AND SPA:** An island resort located five minutes behind Ambergis Caye. Offering a 5-star experience, the resort offers a private gym and beach club among other amenities. Offering exclusive island residence and over the water bungalows.

### PEDRO'S INN

**PEDRO'S INN:** Clean, Cheap, Safe and Fun. Pedro's Hotel provides a clean, comfortable and safe setting at an amazingly cheap price. Nightly events in the Bar throughout the week including Ladies Night every Wednesday.



**HAVANA CIGARS BELIZE:** Our walk-in humidor stocks an ever changing selection of some of the finest hand-made cigars from Cuba, Central America, and the Caribbean. We also offer an air-conditioned smoking lounge with a full bar and café. On Front Street, across from Holiday Hotel.

226-4576 Find us on TripAdvisor!

**SAN PEDRO ARTISANS MARKET:** Over 20 booths featuring local arts and crafts. Wood carvings, jewelry, paintings, sculptures, souvenirs and much more. Open daily from 8AM until 9PM. Located on Angel Coral Street across from the Hon. Louis Sylvestre Stadium.



**ZEN BELIZE:** purpose-built rooftop fitness studio, featuring yoga, pilates, kickboxing, krav maga and bootcamp, overlooking the trees and sea, close to downtown. Daily classes, all levels, internationally certified instructors. Drop-in \$20bz, incl. equipment.

See facebook for our daily schedule.

### TRANSPORTATION

**CRYSTAL AUTO RENTALS** - 2 BZ locations: Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport and 5 Miles Northern Highway. Free shuttle service to and from our Belize City office to anywhere in Belize City. Tel: 011-501-223-1600 Fax: 011-501-223-1900 (direct dialing from U.S.A.) Toll Free in Belize: 0-800-777-7777 Email: reservations@crystal-belize.com or visit our website at http://crystal-belize.com

**COASTAL XPRESS WATER TAXI** – Scheduled ferry service & water taxi for Ambergis Caye. Phone 226-3007.

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## South of San Pedro Town



## EATS & TREATS



**THE COCONUT CAFÉ:** Life's better when it's made from scratch! The Coconut Cafe offers breakfast all day, as well as pizzas, paninis and burritos/wraps. We make all of our own breads, pies and cinnamon rolls from scratch. Open daily from 7-3, closed Wednesdays. Located just south of town, on Coconut Drive, across from Road Kill Bar. 226-4311.



**CASA PICASSO RESTAURANT:** Tapas dining in an artful setting. Global flavors from local ingredients...martinis, wines, cocktails. Vegetarian & gluten-free options. Open Tuesday-Saturday at 5:30pm. Last reservations 9:00pm. 226-4443 or reservations@casapicassobelize.com. Located south of town past Caribeña Gas Station & Belikin Distributor. Check out our specials & weekly "Tasting Thursday" menu at facebook.com/CasaPicassoBelize & casapicassobelize.com.



**EI DIVINO CARIBBEAN STEAKHOUSE & MARTINI BAR:** Banana Beach's signature restaurant, featuring indoor and outdoor dining and sports lounge. Large selection of cocktails and wines. Serving USDA meats, wood fired pizza, fresh seafood, pastas and more. Locals LOVE our ceviche! Daily dinner and drink specials, Happy Hour from 3-7pm 226-2444.



**HIDDEN TREASURE RESTAURANT:** Serving Latin American & Caribbean cuisine in an enchanting atmosphere. Serving dinner only from 5:00pm - 9:00pm, closed on Tuesdays, located in the Escalante neighborhood. Live music on Thursdays! Free shuttle service to customers in town. Contact us 226-4111/4236, www.hiddentreasurebelize.com

**THE PALMILLA RESTAURANT AT VICTORIA HOUSE:** A casual experience with a unique mix of island seafood and continental cuisine. Relaxed and informal yet romantic. Admiral Nelson Bar is the place to be casual and relax in your swimsuit, enjoying breakfast, lunch and dinner with magnificent views. Reservations recommended: 226-2067.



**BLACK ORCHID RESTAURANT & LOUNGE:** Come visit us; just a quick Golf Cart Ride 2 1/2 miles South of Town after the Croc Pond Lagoon and well before the Marco Gonzalez Maya Site. Open Tuesday through Saturday; Happy Hour: 3PM-5PM, Dinner: 5:30-9PM. www.blackorchidrestaurant.com. Reservations Recommended (501) 206-2441.

## PARTY PARTY!

**CRAZY CANUCKS BEACH BAR:** Beach bar located at Exotic Caye Beach Resort. Open daily 11am-midnight. Bar food and daily drink specials. Mondays: Live reggae @8pm Tuesdays: Live Music & Hermit Crab Racing @6:30pm Thursdays: Paint n Splash @2pm Fridays: Trivia @7pm Karaoke @8:30pm Sundays: Live music/horseshoes @3pm Follow us on Facebook. Phone: 670-8001

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[www.mybeautifulbelize.com](http://www.mybeautifulbelize.com)

## Sudoku Answers Puzzle on Page 19

8	2	3	5	6	7	4	9	1
5	9	6	8	4	1	3	2	7
1	4	7	2	3	9	8	6	5
3	6	4	9	5	8	1	7	2
9	1	8	6	7	2	5	4	3
7	5	2	4	1	3	6	8	9
6	7	1	3	9	4	2	5	8
4	8	9	1	2	5	7	3	6
2	3	5	7	8	6	9	1	4



# The tale of Nook Restaurant and Cocktail Bartique!

Nook Restaurant and Cocktail Bartique is the product of Jeff Parker and Erin Park. Jeff and Erin (whose names are similar) are actually not a couple – no for real! :) They met at Erin's second restaurant in Belize, Mojo Lounge in Placencia, Belize. Erin had lived there for eight years, and after a bad breakup following the sale of her first restaurant, extreme community support allowed her to open Mojo Lounge, a concept of eclectic lounge with fun, infused cocktails and locally sourced food. It was a place where everyone can feel welcome.

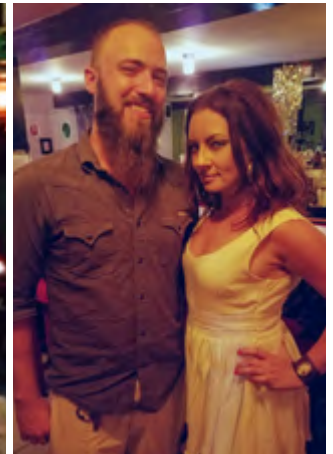
The concept and team of Mojo was melded even more when, after only two months open, they had an electrical fire in the walls of the small building. All the esthetic work was damaged, and the village banded together to help. Mojo was up and running in only nine days again, and better than ever, with a staff who worked tirelessly – some without pay for weeks. They brought Mojo to a top TripAdvisor restaurant for the area, and although recently it's under new ownership, continues to do so...

In comes Jeff Parker, a skilled and seasoned IT professional who decided to try Placencia as a work remote location to test drive the waters, so to speak! Jeff became a regular at Mojo, and friend of Erin and the staff. Eventually, Jeff was thinking of getting into the restaurant game...and Erin gave him many reasons not to! Although the restaurant industry is her passion, she knew it wasn't for everyone!

On a quick weekend getaway, and her first in a year, Erin visited San Pedro and really enjoyed the hustle and bustle of a larger town, being that she was originally from downtown Toronto, Canada. Jeff, from Texas USA, came to San Pedro to dive often due to its proximity to the beautiful reef! And Jeff then had an actual dream one night: he and Erin had teamed up to open a restaurant there! It started as a funny thing, but after a couple weeks of thinking, Erin thought, why not take on a challenge! So they began to look for property and the first day of looking at many spots, they found the current beachside location next to Lily's and Cholo's, local legends.

The place was an empty shell, but Erin had the vision, and with Jeff's investment and Erin's experience, the transformation began. Some paint, a bar, a couple of walls and a lot of love, sweat and tears, and Nook was born. The definition of Nook is making small spaces out of a big one...which is exactly what they have achieved.

A sexy, low-light lounge atmosphere that is casual but surprises you with cuisine from one of Belize's own up and coming young, inspired chefs Demenico Cal! Nook is proud to serve locally sourced fresh products with a diverse menu and nightly features! Barman James Chuc serves some of the best margaritas and micheladas, plus some great infusion cocktails and martinis!



Nook has been open since October of 2015, and Jeff and Erin appreciate all the local support over the last year and the welcome from the community. If anyone is ever headed south for a trip, feel free to stop in and ask them for the great tour guides and restaurants and places to stay in Placencia and surrounding areas!

**Starters:** \$10 - \$20 ~ **Mains:** \$26 - \$40 ~ **Happy Hours:** 4-6:30pm, deals on starters and cocktails.

**Hours:** 4-10, Tuesday – Sunday. **Sunday brunch** starts 11AM – 5PM at the end of January – look for their announcement!

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## Experience pure adventure with Gilford and Alvis in 'Caye Boy Visits the Jungle'

By Chelsea Hall

### HOW MUCH ARE PROPERTY TAXES IN BELIZE?

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**X'TAN HA RESORT**  
AMBERGRIS CAYE, BELIZE

Have you ever felt like a tourist in your own country? Well, author Jessica Retseck Wigh totally gave that illusion in her latest book in her Caye Boy series, 'Caye Boy Visits the Jungle'. The book features Gilford and his little brother Alvis, and their adventures growing up on an island. Gilford and his family live on Caye Caulker, and being separated by many miles of actual water made exploring Belize City quite exciting.

In the book, Gilford and Alvis are so excited to visit Mama's family on the mainland, taking the trip as a big adventure since they're used to their little island and blue house. From doing unusual things such as getting their hair brushed to putting on "itchy" clothes, Jessica's new book shows how the brothers experience culture shock, but adapt very well to the jungle.

From when they come off of the boat on the mainland, the brothers find the city "super busy", filled with houses, cars, buses, trucks, and a hundred fruit stands. After taking the "bush bus" out of the city and through marshy lands, farms, hills, and lastly to the mountains, the boys are amazed to see cows, horses, and rows of orange trees. When they arrived to Mama's mountain, they are greeted by their family with hugs and kisses before heading into their adventure.

Mainland Belize is definitely different from the island. Instead of sand, the jungle is filled with dirt, plants, and trees. The jungle is loud, due to the whooshing noises of the river, trees blowing, and many native animals making noise. The best part of having an adventure is having company, and their cousins help them fit right in by building a secret jungle fort. Gilford's favorite thing to do in the jungle is to lie down and watch the butterflies, while Alvis enjoys playing a warrior and scaring his brother.

The adventure never seems to stop in this book! The children play endlessly, race each other, visit waterfalls, and experience a family-like Sunday dinner. However, after spending a couple of days with Mama's family, the boys' feet started itching for sand. Like Papa said, "you can't take out the Caye out of the Caye Boy!"

Author Jessica explained her inspiration behind her latest Caye Boy book. "My husband and I have been on the island for over 17 years, and we watched our neighborhood children grow up. We have three children of our own, and the first two books were only about the island experience, and so we wanted to add the mainland experience in the third book. When you live on an island, it is very common that people have families scattered around the country. We wanted the island children from the book to visit their mother's extended family in the mainland, and have a different kind of fun from what they're used to," said Jessica.

For those who are in love with the Caye Boy series like I am, another is currently in the works! "The next book will be a spin-off from the series. I am currently working on a field-guide for children to teach them about the animals of Belize.

It's a little bit more information-based, than a story-book, but Gilford and Alvis will still be the main characters," said Jessica.

Jessica also spoke about her interest in preserving printed publication. "I am passionate about the written word on paper, and I think it is so fun to go out on a chair or hammock and feel through the pages. However, I completely understand the need for that to be transmitted electronically. But being an author and having a journalism background, I'm in a push-and-pull situation where you want to preserve written things and understand the impact it has on the environment. It's the same information, but you experience it a totally different way. There's nothing like collecting books, and reading them to your kids," said Jessica.

Published by Little Blue House Publishing, the Caye Boy series is illustrated by Jessica's old-time college friend, Andrew Young. They are available at [www.cayebuy.com](http://www.cayebuy.com) and on Amazon.com for world-wide shipping. Oh, and be sure to look for Hermes the crab on each and every page! You can also get them across the country at these local retailers:



**Belize City:** Belize International Airport (Toucan Gift Stores) and Moho Chocolate

**Caye Caulker:** Caye Caulker Plaza Hotel, Cayeboard Connection, Caribbean Colors Art Café, Island Link, Island Magic, Mirany's Gift Shop, RandOM Yoga, Seaside Cabanas, Laca Laca Toucan and Little Blue Gift Shop

**Cayo:** Art Box, Black Rock Lodge, Hidden Valley Inn, and Orange Gallery

**San Pedro:** Belize Arts Gallery, Captain Morgan's, El Pescador, Las Terrazas, Moho Chocolate, Portofino Resort, Salty Dog Gift Shop, Toucan Gift Stores, Twelve Belize, White Sands Cove and Ramon's Village Resort

**Placencia and Off-shore Cayes:** Chabil Mar, Crocodile Gift Shop, One World Gift Shop, Robert's Grove and Hatchet Caye Resort



# Discover Hidden Treasure Restaurant

By Janelle Cowo

*Tucked away from the hustle and bustle of downtown San Pedro, is a family owned restaurant dishing out some tasty dinner options. Hidden Treasure Restaurant is located in the Escalante Subdivision, about 1.5 miles south of San Pedro Town, and specializes in Latin American and Caribbean Cuisine.*

## What is Hidden Treasure like?

The elegant restaurant offers the perfect setting for romantic dinners. Candlelight showers the rustic dining hall, giving off an intimate feel.



## Specialty dishes

With emphasis on locally sourced seafood, Hidden Treasure offers a variety of Surf & Turf dishes. A must try is their uniquely created "Seafood Treasure". A whole lobster tail with fresh snapper fillet and shrimp, grilled and served with a garlic lemon butter sauce, coconut white rice and charred seasonal grilled veggies. The dish is appropriately named for the bountiful feast you will receive – it's definitely a "treasure chest" of flavours!

## What about drinks?

There is no better pairing for seafood than wine, and Hidden Treasure carries a large selection of imported wines. But the star has to be their Hidden Treasure Sangria. Red Wine mixed with apple juice, mango juice, water melon juice, pineapple juice, cantaloupe juice, straw berry syrup and dark rum – a truly exquisite concoction, a definite must try!

## And the staff?

A host of trained servers, bartenders and kitchen personnel ensure a flawless experience at Hidden Treasure. Always with smiles on their faces the guys over at Hidden Treasure are sure to make your dining experience a delight.

*The Hidden Treasure Restaurant is opened Wednesday to Mondays from 5PM to 9PM, serving dinner only. For more information, contact them at 226-4111 or [rubenm@btl.net](mailto:rubenm@btl.net)*



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# Swimming with Sharks

By Tamara Sniffin



So, your tour guide says you're going to swim with sharks? "Are they kidding?" you reason as scenes from JAWS are replayed in your head. Shaaa...shaaa...SHARK!!!! that poor girl screams before she's mercilessly pulled down into the bloody abyss. Oh, hell no, you aren't getting me into the water with those eating machines, no way, no how!

For many visitors to Belize, exploring the waters of our Caribbean Sea is on the top of their must-do list. Be it snorkeling, diving, or just swimming off the beach, the water is teeming with beautiful, exotic marine creatures, and yes, maybe a shark or two, depending on where you are. For some of us, spotting a shark is an exhilarating experience we feel fortunate to have as we marvel at the beautiful creature in his wild habitat. For others, this experience can cause a heart-stopping panic attack! More than once I have been on a tour boat at Shark Ray Alley in the Hol Chan Marine Reserve when a guest has backed out of getting into the water for fear of these denizens of the deep. And who can blame them? Although they've been portrayed as man eaters, our toothy friends have gotten a bad rap.

Belize is renowned for an impressive variety of sharks, from the offshore Whale Sharks that visits our southern waters in the early to mid-spring, to the

**Continued on Page 17**

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## Swimming with Sharks

Continued from Page 16

inshore mainstays such as Caribbean Reef Sharks, Blacktip, Tiger, Bull and Hammerheads. Sighting these beauties while diving or snorkeling is a rare treat not often experienced.

On the other hand, there is one shark you are most likely to come across while in the water, and that is the Nurse shark. Have no fear! This is where you can impress your friends by saying you swam with sharks, without losing life or limb! All sea life needs to be treated with due respect and given proper space, but not only are Nurse sharks the ones you'll most likely see, they are for the most part, harmless to humans.

The scientific name for the Nurse shark is *Ginglymostoma cirratum*, which is a mix of Greek and Latin and means "curled, hinged mouth" to describe this shark's somewhat puckered appearance. How the name "nurse shark" came about is unclear, but may have come from the sucking sound they make when hunting for prey in the sand, which vaguely resembles that of a nursing baby. They are kind of like sea-floor vacuum cleaners!

Nurse sharks are slow-moving bottom-dwellers and live in reefs, channels between mangrove islands and sand flats. They can be huge, up to 14 feet in length! They have very strong

jaws filled with thousands of tiny, serrated teeth, and will bite defensively if stepped on or bothered by divers who assume they're docile. If you don't mess with them, they won't mess with you, which is kind of the rule of thumb with most wildlife. Nurse sharks use their strong jaws to crush and eat shellfish and even coral, but prefer to dine on fish, shrimp, and squid. They are gray-brown and have distinctive tail fins that can be up to one-fourth their total length. Unlike most other sharks, nurses are smooth to the touch.

These docile sharks reach maturity at about 15 to 20 years of age, with an average life span of 25 years. Nurse sharks are ovoviviparous, meaning their eggs develop and hatch inside the female's body, where the hatchlings continue to grow until live birth occurs. Gestation is six months, and a typical litter size is 21 to 28 pups.

If you have the chance to swim with these underwater ambassadors it won't take you long to feel at ease. Unless they are being chummed, chances are they will keep a good

distance from you and be busy doing their sharky thing looking for food on the sea bed. You will not see big scary teeth, or aggressive behavior as long as you keep your hands out of their mouths! You may be tempted to touch them but as with all marine life, please refrain from doing so.

Swimming with sharks is just one of the amazing adventures you can have while visiting Belize, so don't let your fears get the best of you. Jump on in, the water is fine, and so are the Nurse sharks.



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# New Year = New Adventures!

## Here's to 2017

Just like that 2016 is over. 2017 welcomes us with open arms, with the opportunity to make new memories and live exciting new experiences. A new year often sees us making resolutions, challenging ourselves to add to the storybook of our lives. There is no better way to do that than creating a list of fun/in Belize. Call it your 'Belize Bucket List'!

By Janelle Cowo

### DIVE/SNORKEL THE BLUE HOLE

This is an easy one, after all who doesn't want to visit one of the top aquatic destinations in the world? The collapsed sink hole is visited by thousands each year who marvel at its complex structure and amazing marine life. We want you to enjoy that too!

### HIKE UP VICTORIA'S PEAK

Time to get those hiking boots ready! While Victoria's Peak is not the highest summit in Belize (Doyle's Delight is the highest peak in Belize at 1,124 m), it is the most iconic. At 1,120 m, it definitely gives you enough of a challenge!

### EXPLORE THE ANCIENT MAYA CITY OF CARACOL

Not only is this archaeological site the largest Maya city in Belize, it is also home to the tallest man made structure in the country! Dating back to 1200 BC, there's lots of culture, history and heritage to be discovered.

### EXPLORE THE ATM CAVES

This is one that will change your life! Actun Tunichil Muknal is a Maya archaeological site that includes fossilized skeletons, ceramics, and stoneware, all located underground. You will hike, swim, climb and everything in between to get to explore this cave, but what you get to see is worth the effort.

### CAVE TUBE THE CRYSTAL CAVES

Since we are already talking about caves, how about cave tubing through a sparkling and glittering cave system?



Talk about close encounters of the marine kind!

### VISIT THE BELIZE MUSEUM

I know this doesn't sound like an adrenaline rush, but you have to make time to learn more about the history of a country. This quaint museum is located in Belize City, in what was the country's first prison (the prison that saw the last execution as a result of capital punishment held in the Belize). The artefacts housed there will take you down the colonial path that transformed British Honduras into Belize.

### VISIT THE BELIZE ZOO

Without a doubt this has to be the most charming little zoo in the world! Learn all about Belize's native species and, if you are lucky, say hello to the jaguar Junior Buddy, and now his new little neighbour Chiqui!

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Say hello to Junior Buddy at The Belize Zoo!

### GO CHASING WATERFALLS

With hundreds of waterfalls in the country, you have to visit at least one in 2017. The most iconic waterfalls include Five Sisters, 1000 Foot Falls, Black Rock Waterfall and Tiger Fern Double Waterfall. Whichever one you choose to explore, you won't be disappointed with its natural beauty and surreal structure.

### STAY AT COCKSCOMB BASIN

The only jaguar reserve in the Western Hemisphere, Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Stann Creek District. As a protected reserve, the forest is untouched and you even have chance of spotting a jaguar in its natural habitat! (In fact, your Victoria Peak hike can start from there!)

### BE A PART OF PROGRAM FOR BELIZE

Nestled deep in the north-western jungles of Belize is the largest private reserve and second largest protected area. You can visit Program for Belize either simply for recreation or to participate in their conservation efforts. Either way you will experience breath taking wildlife encounters. This area is home to 200 species of trees, 390 species of birds, 70 species of mammals and 39 species of concern (meaning protected animals).

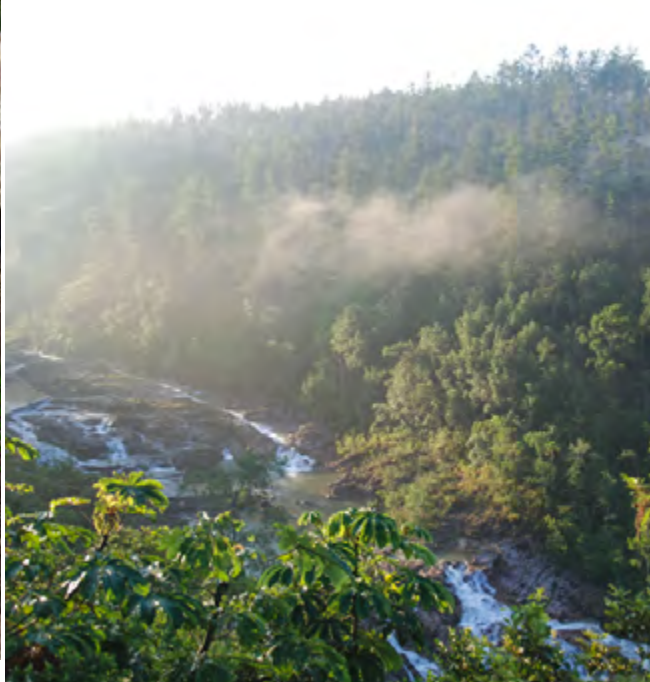
### FLY OVER THE BELIZE BARRIER REEF RESERVE SYSTEM

There is no better vantage point than from up in the skies. To truly appreciate the awesomeness of the world's second largest barrier reef, you have to view it from above (after exploring it inside and out!).

### TALK TO THE LOCALS AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS

This may seem corny, but what better adventure than to have a new friend? Learn about his/her culture and create new memories along the way! Find out their favourites – especially local eats and secret getaways. Who knows, you could make lifelong buddies to catch up with upon your return to Belize!

**How about that for an adventure-filled 2017? Time to get packed and ready for the new year in Belize fun!**



These waterfalls are worth chasing at dawn!



Program for Belize is every birder's dream!



Explore the ATM caves...it's worth the hike!

## The Fun Corner

### Wolfe's Woofers

#### The Christmas Gift

"Hey, Bob. Bring your coffee and have a seat."

Bob came over to my table with two cups of coffee from Celi's Deli. One was for his wife, Nancy, who arrived shortly carrying two breakfast burritos.

"Nancy's off to Mexico for a week," Bob said to me. "She's going for a seminar on the tourist business."

"Where are you going in Mexico?" I asked.

"It's being held in Mexico City."

"I'll be surprised if you don't like it," I said. "The size of the city makes New York look like a small town. Plus, they have the same shops like Saks Fifth Avenue and Tiffany's."

"That sounds interesting," Nancy said. "I'll do some shopping. Can I bring something back for you? Maybe a Christmas gift?"

"Oh, no thanks."

"You can get something for me," Bob said. "Bring me one of those Mexican girls."

Bob joined me yesterday on the deck of the Holiday Hotel for coffee.

"Nancy's back from Mexico," he announced. "When her plane comes in she's going to meet me for breakfast."

When Nancy arrived it was hugs all around.

"Wow, what a trip!" she said. "The seminar was great and I really got some power shopping done."

"Did you bring my present?" Bob asked.

"What present was that?"

"I asked you to bring me back a Mexican girl."

"Well, I did what I could," she said. "Now, we have to wait a few months to see if it's a girl."



By Dennis Wolfe

### SuDoku Time!

Answers on Page 12

		3			7			1
5					1	3	2	
				3	9	8		
	6		9	5				
9			6		2			3
				1	3		8	
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2			7			9		





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