



*Indulge in the finest,
or do-it-yourself...
It is up to you
how you play in Belize!*



* Pamper
yourself at
Victoria House's
New Spa



* Learn to
make chocolate

* Relleno: A kitchen's
crowning glory

* Acquafino aims for
the ultimate in luxury



* Elegant dining
at EVOO Euro
Bistro

* Pirate's Not-So-Secret
Beach Bar & Grill

* How prepared are you for
a day trip?



* Bring in 2017 in Belize

From the Editor *Tamara Sniffin*

One of my favorite Dr. Seuss books has to be "Oh, the Places You'll Go." I often catch myself repeating this part of the story when I'm scaling a Maya Temple or making a new friend when exploring our gorgeous country.

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

*You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.*

You're on your own. And you know what you know.

And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

The problem is...it's not easy deciding where to go when it comes to picking a destination in Belize, because the variety of locations, activities and accommodations are endless!

And, what could be harder than that? Picking a list of favorites when looking back at all of our adventures and the amazing people we have met over this last year! From exploring the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary and our unBelizable MesoAmerican Reef, to a pontoon boat ride and waterfalls on the Macal River, to meeting the wonderful Martinez family at Martz Farms, to attending the annual Chocolate Festival in the Toledo district and Lobster Festivals in both San Pedro and Caye Caulker, to meeting Belize's Soca Queen Ernestine Carballo, to a beachside getaway in Hopkins at Almond Beach, to touring Marie Sharp's Hot Sauce factory, to exploring Xunantunich Archeological Reserve in the Cayo District, to a delightful stay at the Mystic River Resort new San Ignacio, and of course the incredible adventure into the Chiquibul National Park to look for Scarlet Macaws with the one-and-only Roni Martinez, to name a FEW, it's impossible to rate these people and places in any order other than fantastic, wonderful and yes, life changing.

So, with your brains in your head and your feet in your shoes, just where will YOU decide to go? No matter what you do, I'm certain you'll have the same problem I have in picking a favorite 2016 memory of My Beautiful Belize, they are all priceless...

About the front page photo: Traditionally, San Pedro Town on Ambergris Caye ushers in the Christmas season with the Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. Held on the first Sunday after Thanksgiving, the San Pedro Christmas Tree is an iconic figure at Central Park during the festive season. The tree is donated to the town by Bowen and Bowen Limited, and each year it bears twinkling lights and seasonal decorations. The lighting ceremony is a festive occasion for islanders, as it brings together locals and visitors alike. The ceremony includes live entertainment and treats are given out to those in attendance as a symbol of giving on behalf of the Town Council.



Editor Sniffin with fabulous Ernestine Carballo

Web di go ahn eena December?!



December 4th - San Pedro Dance Academy Christmas Show at San Pedro Lion's Den, San Pedro Town at 7PM (cover charge)



December 7th - Blues 'n Belize Concert with John Primer and Bob Corritore at St. George's Caye Resort at noon (cover charge)



December 10th - Holiday Craft Fair and Tres Cocos Lighting Ceremony at The Truck Stop from 3PM to 6PM (free)

December 11th - Love FM Christmas Parade through the street of San Pedro Town starting at 7PM (free)



December 15th - A Belizean Kriol Krismos Bram at Battle Field Park in Belize City starting at 2PM (free)



December 17th - Holiday Lighted Boat Parade on the coast of San Pedro Town starting at 7PM (free)



December 17th - Rum Bazaar at Travellers One Stop Rum Shop and Museum in Belize City from 8AM to 6PM (free)



December 26th - Boxing Day Horse Race at Burrell Boom in the Belize District starting at 1PM (free)

December 31st - San Pedro Lions New Year's Party at San Pedro Lion's Den, San Pedro Town at 11PM (cover charge)
- Belize International Yoga Festival at Harbour View Green in Belize City starting at 6PM
- What's On Tap at Belikin Corporate Office, 1 King Street in Belize City starting at 4PM (free)



December 31st - New Year Block Party at Central Park, San Pedro Town starting at 9PM (free)



January 1st - New Year Horse Race at Burrell Boom in Belize District starting at 1PM (free)

SuDoku Time! Answers on Page 12

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	7					8	
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Wolfe's Woofers My Husband

By: Dennis Wolfe



"You can sit here," the lady on the bus said, making room for me.

"Thank you," I said, as I gratefully took a seat.

"I am Mrs. Vernon from Dangriga," she said. "Where are you from?"

"I have lived in San Pedro for nearly thirty years," I told her.

As we exchanged small talk she said, "For some reason you remind me so much of my late husband, David."

"That's very flattering, I'm sure," I said. "How long has it been since he passed away?"

"Oh, it's been six years now. The family misses him every single day."

"He must have been a good husband," I said.

"My husband was the very best," she replied. "He treated me like gold."

"How many children do you have?"

"We had six children; He had a great job as an electrician and he provided everything for them. My husband was a wonderful father."

"That's really nice," I said.

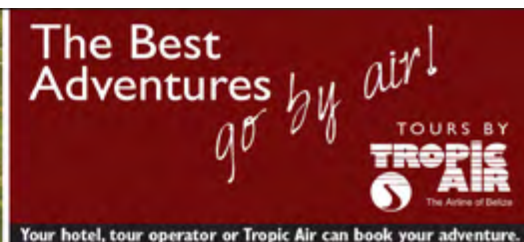
"We even had four grandchildren," she told me. "My husband loved to spoil our grandbabies."

"You're very young to be a widow," I said. "How old was he when he passed on?"

"He was forty-eight years old,"

"That's very young to leave a widow, the children and grandchildren," I said. "Do you mind telling me what caused his death?"

"My David was the best husband ever. He was a wonderful father and a loving grandfather," she said. "But he was a terrible electrician."



Wellness and pampering at the new Victoria House Spa

By Tamara Sniffin



How do you improve on perfection? For over 30 years, the award-winning Victoria House Resort on Ambergris Caye has set the standard for intimate, luxurious accommodations. Nestled on a gorgeous beachfront, with white Caribbean colonial

buildings and lush landscapes, this island escape also features an elegant restaurant and cozy beachside bar. It's the ideal romantic getaway, and the ultimate relaxation destination. With every attention to detail met, there was only one thing a

miss...a splendid spa.

Per resort Managing Director Janet Woollam, the new spa, which opened on September first, is exactly what guests have been looking for, and the response has been enthusiastic. "We're being told by repeat

guests of 20 years that the spa fits in beautifully with the resort, and with today's more health-conscious traveler, it fills a need," says Woollam. "Naturally we're excited to hear that kind of validation."

Continued on Page 4





Crazy Canucks Beach Bar

Sundays 3pm:	Live Music (Cover Band) & Horseshoes
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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New Spa at Victoria House Continued from Page 3

The stunning new spa is the largest of its kind on the island, and perfectly complements the colonial architecture of the resort. With impressive high ceilings, hardwood floors and abundant windows, the area is awash in warm sunlight. The soft sound of meditative music permeates the air and the serene setting quickly lulls you into the relaxation mode.

Wellness specialist and manager of Victoria House Spa, Jennifer Ingvaldstad, greeted us during our visit, and told us that they are proud to use locally sourced ingredients

such as coconut oil, sugar, honey, hibiscus flowers and essential oils in their treatments. These wonderful remedies will also be a line of products that will soon be available for purchase at the spa.

Spanning an impressive 3,500 square feet, the new facility features four treatment salons, including a couple's salon. Three of the rooms open to a private, natural courtyard complete with outside showers. From massages to manicures, polishes to pedicures, their team of ten massage therapists

Continued on Page 4





New Spa at Victoria House Continued from Page 4

and estheticians offer more than 36 body and beauty treatments, including rejuvenating spa services such as body wraps and scrubs, facials, tinting, waxing, wellness rituals, masques and more. They even offer treatments specifically

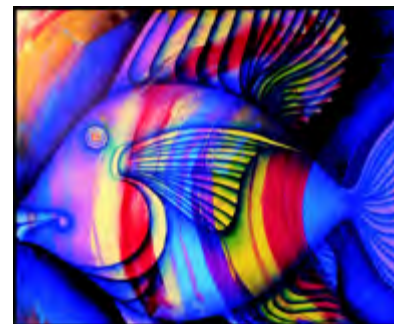
for brides, bridal parties, couples and expectant mothers.

For those who don't want to miss their workout while on vacation (which means guilt-free indulging at their Palmilla Restaurant), the spa includes a spacious, fully equipped fitness center with separate shower rooms for men and women, and a large enclosed courtyard where yoga classes are held.

With so many amenities to choose from, some may have a hard time deciding on the pampering they want...but in all seriousness, who doesn't love a good massage? Spa manager Jennifer is also a massage therapist, and she has the gift of locating the trouble spots in your back and shoulders you didn't even know you had until she deftly massages them away. Once she has worked her magic on those areas, she places hot stones on your lower back to maintain the warm radiance while massaging your legs and oh yes, the feet. It's amazing how good that feels! The entire massage is dedicated to detail, with special attention even paid to the hands, scalp and knees. Using lightly scented eucalyptus oil, the body is fully relaxed and rejuvenated after the hour-long treatment. One could certainly become addicted to such indulgence!

The Victoria House Spa also offers many of their treatments on their over the water spa pier, or if you prefer, you can arrange for your treatment in your room or another location of your choice. And, you don't have to be a guest at the resort to enjoy the spa services.

It's hard to believe life could be any better when staying at Victoria House, but once again, they have outdone themselves when it comes to customer service and amenities. Victoria House is located about two miles south of San Pedro Town. For more information about the spa and treatments available please visit their website at <http://www.victoria-house.com>.




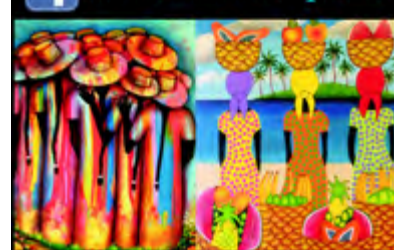
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Barrier Reef Drive, San Pedro Town**



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YOUR LOCAL BRAND
WITH INTERNATIONAL
EXPERTISE.



By Mary Gonzalez

Biting into a piece of handmade chocolate could almost be a religious experience. The nuances of flavor, the texture...no wonder it has been called food of the gods! Knowing what I do now, each time I bite into a piece, I think of how complex the process of its creation was. I am utterly grateful to the ancestor who once upon a time, accidentally or on purpose, decided that this delicacy should exist.

So, how does chocolate actually get made? How is it that these bars, drops, squares, bonbons and truffles get to our greedy little paws? Luckily for us, our neighbors down the street run the Belize Chocolate Company, and they offer a fun 30-minute chocolate-making class. Sign us up!

Chris Beaumont, one of the owners, walks guests through the process, sharing some of the history and anecdotes associated with the discovery and process of chocolate. "Every bean every bar born in Belize" is their motto, and their process begins with beans from small farmers in the Toledo district. Did you know that there are different kinds/species of cacao trees and as such, flavors can vary widely?

The Cacao pods (fruit) are first picked, then cracked open to remove the seeds. A thick (delicious) pulp surrounds approximately 50-60 cacao beans. They are fermented then sun-dried then roasted, ready for the next process which involves cracking the bean shells.

To our surprise, we learn that the enterprising farmers also make a delicious tea from the cracklings! Truly no waste there! After a taste of the dried beans, we take turns at a metate. What is a metate you may ask? It's an old-fashioned grinder, with base made of super heavy stone, with a smaller oblong handle (mano) that is used to mash and grind down the cracked beans (nibs) until they form a thick paste. The process to get the nibs to turn into a liquor would take about three days using a machine. Our feeble attempts at the metate suddenly seemed daunting. Thankful for the Chocolate factory's machinery, we tasted the readily available liquor that Chris passed around.

With an idea of what we were meant to create via metate, we again took turns as Chris showed us how the ground nibs were mixed with both sugar and milk...tasting at each step and slowly finding out how the ratio of cocoa to milk/sugar makes a difference. The more sugar and milk, obviously the sweeter and creamier the bar would be. I found myself gravitating towards the less sweet stuff...5-year-old me would have keeled over in shock...so, shhhhhh, don't tell her!

Our palates were further pleased when Chris passed around tasting squares of the Chocolate Boutique's confections – from dark to milk and even white, there's a square for everyone!

Chocololics are invited to visit the boutique on Barrier Reef Drive, and indulge their taste buds. Bite into their delicious brownies and cookies; sip hot chocolate or tea and even pick up some extra products made with the versatile cacao. You can also try your hand at making some chocolate with Chris by taking their class, available weekdays for \$15BZ. Classes last anywhere from half an hour to 40 minutes, and they are informative, fun, and most importantly, TASTY! Email them at info@belizechocolatecompany.com or step inside the shop and ask the lovely attendants to sign you up!





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Email: info@gaiariverlodge.com

The crowning glory in the kitchen: *Relleno* By Mary Gonzalez

The day I learned to make relleno, I felt an indescribable pride. Raised to stand on my own two feet, independent and knowledgeable both at books and in the home, the ability to command a complex, labor-intensive dish is something this home cook aspired to for ages. My only regret is that my mother wasn't around to see this happen...but I am pretty sure she'd be proud – heck she probably would have been learning right alongside me.

For many, the relleno is a family-style meal, which also involves using more than one member of the family's help! When making a big meal like this, it's not uncommon to see Mom, Aunt, Niece and Grandma running the show. Young children are often sent to run errands and learn to steer clear of the cooking space, sneaking ever closer as the smell from the bubbling pot gets more and more intense.

Considered a primarily Mestizo dish, the relleno consists of a mixture of chicken, pork or beef, eggs, and the unique black recado. Recado is mostly known as the red achiote paste that is used to make delicious gravy for stewed chicken. However, there is a black version of it made by burning corn tortillas which is then mixed with a little water, roasted peppers and seasonings to make a paste that then turns the soup a thick black with an indescribable flavor.

There are many steps to the making of relleno, but as always, mise en place (aka, have everything you need at hand) and dedicating a little time and effort will yield truly delicious results! Let us know if you try this version!

Ingredients for an 8-serving batch:

1 4-5 lb chicken	2 tbsp garlic powder
Black Recado – 2 blocks (2"x3" inch blocks)	2 medium onions, diced
1lb ground beef or pork	1 bell pepper, diced
8 hardboiled eggs	1 stalk celery, diced
2 eggs	15 allspice seeds
1tbsp chicken consommé	2 sticks cinnamon
1 tbsp beef consommé	1tbsp dried oregano
5 cloves garlic, minced	1 bunch cilantro
	Water

Directions:

Wash and clean the whole chicken with lime or vinegar. Keep all skin on (will be used to seal stuffing for later).

Season the beef or pork with 1 cube (1") of recado diluted in a small amount of water (1/4 cup), 1tsp black pepper, beef consommé, ¾ of the diced onion, ¾ green pepper, the garlic, ½ of the celery. Cook the ground meat on medium flame, stirring constantly.

In the meantime, peel hardboiled eggs, and separate the yolks from the whites.

Finely chop/mince the whites or mash with a potato masher until finely ground

Add to the beef mixture and combine over low heat until the egg takes on flavor of the meat (taste test). Turn off the heat

Break 2 remaining (raw) eggs over the beef mixture and stir to combine, and set aside.

Take chicken neck, and reinsert into cavity, sewing the excess neck skin shut to seal.

Stuff the chicken at its base cavity with small handfuls of the ground meat mixture. Add one egg yolk after each handful of the mixture, and repeat process until the cavity is full, or all meat has been used. Sew the cavity shut using the excess skin, to ensure the mixture does not fall out during cooking.

If there is some meat leftover, place in a foil packet. Seal completely then prick a few holes to allow some steam to escape.

Place the whole chicken in a large pot. If you have a foil packet, add it to the pot as well.



In a separate container, dissolve the remaining black recado cubes in some water, then strain into the pot (straining is necessary to prevent the thrash from mixing into the soup). Add cilantro, remaining onion, sweet pepper, celery, chicken consommé, garlic powder, oregano, spice seeds and cinnamon sticks. Add water to the pot until it covers the chicken by about 3 inches.

Place over medium heat until chicken is cooked (approximately 1 hour) – add salt if necessary when checking to see if chicken is cooked.

Serve hot with corn tortillas. (Some serve this with rice).





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.

EVOO: With the only hand crafted pastas, home-made mozzarella cheeses and chocolate fondue in the country, EVOO's distinct menu complements its captivating and intimate bistro decor. As the one and only Gin House in Belize, EVOO provides exclusive imported Gins & Tonics. 226-4001

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.

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 Matanchica 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 across from the Palapa Bar. 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

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 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!



THE SAN PEDRO LIONS CLUB Join us on Fridays for fun bingo (7PM) and delicious chicken BBQ (from noon). All proceeds go back to assisting the community in times of need.

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.

LOLA'S PUB - The best stocked bar on the island! Martinis, Single Malt, Bourbon, Mini Beer Shots, Tequila Shot Chillers. **KARAOKE-FREE ZONE!** Across from Belize Bank on Front Street. 206-2120.

WANT RUM? GOT IT! 100% Belizean Rums. Travellers Liquors FACTORY OUTLET and showroom! Home of world class and award winning rums. Wholesale and retail. Daily complementary rum tastings of over 25 products! #15 Pescador Drive 226-4690. www.facebook.com/wantrum



PALAPA BAR AND GRILL – On the Wet Willy's Dock. Daily 11am – 11pm. Relax on the inner-tubes and have your bucket of ice cold beers lowered to you. Outdoor seating, awesome smoked food, cheeseburgers, seafood and tropical drinks and an astonishing view!

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



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 on the island. 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

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.

GET TRANSFERS - Executive transfer and tour services anywhere in Belize: Chetumal, Cancun, Quintana Roo & even Merida and Guatemala. Phone: 422-2485 (Fx: 422-3511) or email: info@gettransfers.com.

RAINBOW TAXI – Caye Caulker golf cart; guided island tours; reliable service. 226-0123. Minerva: 661-6254 or Champ 602-8136.



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.hidden treasurebelize.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.

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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

Sudoku Answers Puzzle on Page 2

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

Acquafino Island Resort & Spa aims for the ultimate in luxury

By Janelle Cowo



"Holy sunset!" I thought to myself, as I took my spot on a poolside lounge chair at one of the newest luxury island resorts off the coast of Ambergris Caye. And where was this spectacular sunset you may ask? It is at Acquafino Island Resort and Spa.

Just west of Ambergris Caye, there is a little island that is home to what promises to be an ultra-luxury private getaway. While the resort is not open yet, it has been the location for a couple fund raising events and we were offered a sneak peek of what is to come at Acquafino.

It's just a five-minute boat ride to the resort, and the perfect chance to marvel at the beautiful western coast of San Pedro Town. At Acquafino, the 230-degree views of the Caribbean Sea set the mood for the perfect vacation. The focal point of the resort has to be their beach club – 10,000 square feet palapa covered area with bar and seating showcases an infinity swimming pool facing the western horizon. The beach club is the perfect spot to catch some fabulous sunsets. Raise your glass to toast the surreal hues of the sky as the sun says goodbye to another day in paradise.

Acquafino aims to offer a well-rounded experience to visitors from top of the line spa to health packages. The spa at Acquafino is designed to stimulate your senses with unique treatments tailored to each guest's desires. Most importantly, Acquafino prides itself in using handmade Belizean products for that "Un-Belizeable" experience!

With private "on demand" complimentary water transportation, visitors can easily explore San Pedro Town and immerse themselves in the full Belizean experience. As if that's not enough, you have the option for butler assistance! With all these amenities, Acquafino hopes to create a seamless opportunity to stay on a luxurious private island while being only minutes away to town central. "Our goal is to give our guests the best experience, and to never have to say 'no'," said President of Acquafino, William Narod.

Developers are most pleased to ensure that the luxurious Acquafino does not overshadow the natural environment. Rather, it emphasises it. Each of the stunning villas are located right on the water's edge, surrounded by native plants. They have even gone a



step further by implementing a marine sanctuary to safeguard Belize's marine species in need of refuge. Isn't that awesome?!

So consider Acquafino for your next getaway to Belize and "learn the very meaning of indulgence". Acquafino Island Resort is managed by Sandy Point Resorts, and scheduled to have a soft opening by February 2017. To learn more, visit www.acquafinobelize.com.



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Fabulously elegant dining at EVOO Euro Bistro

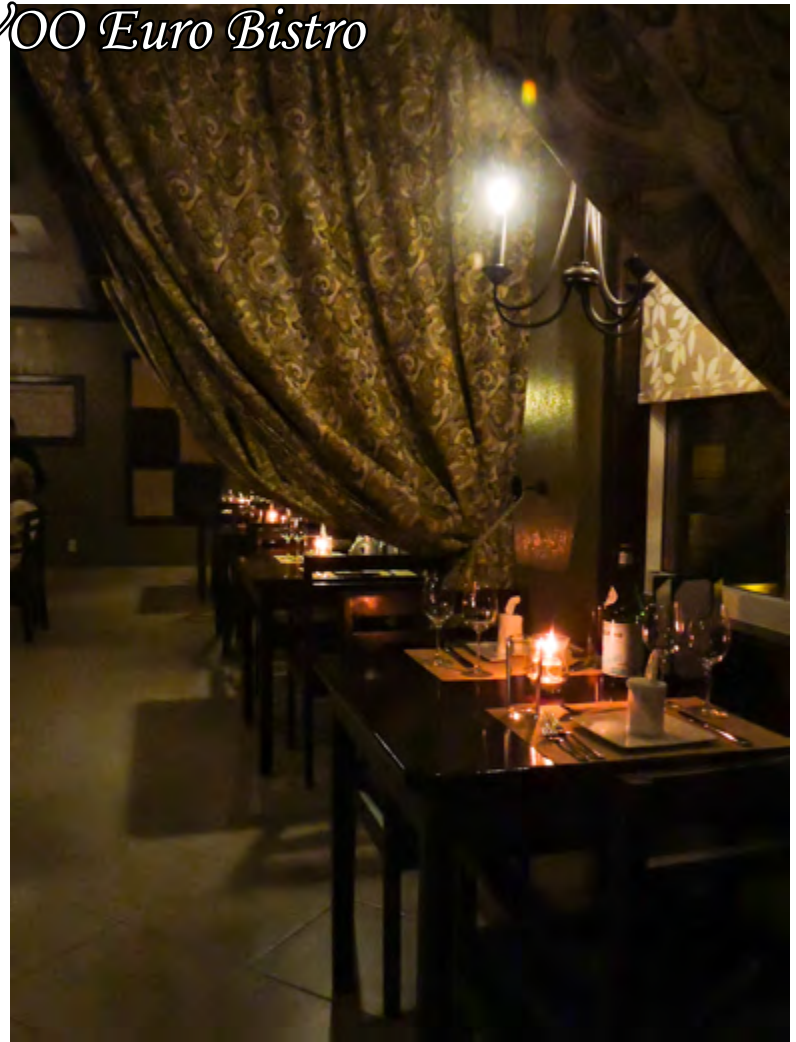
By Mary Gonzalez



They started with Aji, bringing the concept of Spanish-style tapas to Ambergris Caye with much success. Rain Rooftop Restaurant and Terrace came next, with stunning vistas and delectable cuisine. Now, with the grand opening of their latest, incredible creation, Hugo and Victoria Meyer have truly outdone themselves. EVOO Euro Bistro provides ambiance and style in spades, while the kitchen turns out divine dishes.



The Meyers did much research, and found to their surprise that the Euro Bistro concept is a rare one. Luckily for us, they went to work and put forth a beautiful new restaurant that will give residents and visitors a taste of something new and fabulous. As for the name, they chose EVOO - an acronym for Extra Virgin Olive Oil, and is widely used in European cuisine.



Intimate and refined, EVOO's 3rd floor location, provides a stunning backdrop to gourmet dining. From the water wall at the entrance, to the show-stopping crystal chandelier in the middle of the room, twinkling prettily under ambient light...mingle in the open, or cozy up to your date at a table for two. What is clear is that a statement has been made. Flair and chic combine to give you a European vibe,

Continued on Page 15



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Photography by Olivera Rusu

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Awesome Burgers
Corn Hole
Wednesday Feliz Dart Challenge

Open from 1PM - 11PM

1/2 mile north of the bridge @ The Cloisters, San Pedro, Belize

EVOO Euro Bistro Continued from Page 14

while its intimate size lets it truly live up to its bistro title.

As beautiful as the location is,

the true test comes to the food. Executive Chef Hugo Meyer's European cooking expertise

combined with fresh ingredients to create a menu PACKED with flavor.



Starters include Roast Beef al Tartufo (roast beef, truffle oil, shaved parmesan, capers, arugula and kale), the signature EVOO Flatbread (topped with artichokes, spinach, tomatoes, goat cheese, walnuts, honey, prosciutto and EVOO) and Tabla de Carnes and Tabla de Quesos (roughly translated to meat and cheese platters). Each platter was perfect to share with a companion or two, and their bold bright flavors setting us up for the main courses.

Having never had Moussaka, how could I pass up the op-

portunity to taste it?! Tamara couldn't resist the seductive call of fresh spinach and ricotta stuffed ravioli. We both found ourselves incredibly happy with our choices. The Moussaka was perfect; piping hot and cheesy, with layers of earthy eggplant and other vegetables in a creamy béchamel sauce. Little 'pockets of pasta heaven', the fresh hand-made ravioli were bursting with a creamy spinach and ricotta mixture, topped with a mushroom and black truffle cream sauce. Accompanied by a glass of merlot,

dinner was a total hit.

What Hugo and Victoria have accomplished alongside their talented staff is truly remarkable. EVOO Euro Bistro is a welcome addition to the dining options of lucky palates on Ambergris Caye!

The one and only Gin House providing exclusive imported Gins to make unique and refreshing drinks, EVOO Euro Bistro is located at Grand Caribe, on the third floor of the main building. Reservations are recommended; call 226-4001.



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Journey to Pirate's Not-So-Secret Beach Bar & Grill

By Tamara Sniffin



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When vacationing on Ambergris Caye, for the most part, all adventures include water sports or day trips to the mainland. Although this is great fun, sometimes you just want to keep your feet on terra firma. If you've had your share of lazing on the beach, wearing out the hammock and the book you've napped through on more than one occasion, perhaps it's time for a little golf cart expedition?

Up until a year or so ago, there was an area 6.5 miles north of San Pedro Town that was referred to as the Secret Beach. Getting there involved traveling on a not-so-great dirt road that, at times, depending on the weather, could be nearly unpassable. For those adventurous souls with sturdy carts and stamina, the drive could take well over an hour from town, but after a bumpy and sometimes harrowing journey,

the rewards were great. Located on the western lagoon side on the island, from the main road one turns into the Mata Grande area, travels through Grand Belizean Estates and ends up at a beach unlike any other on Ambergris. The shore is intermittently lined with lava rock and sandy landings, and the water is clear and calm. The westward view is dotted with small islands, other lagoon shores and in the far distance you can see Leonardo DiCaprio's Blackadore Caye. The sandy floor, and shallow water makes for great swimming and languishing with water toys.

For many of us islanders, we would envy the stories told by those who ventured to this hid-

den oasis, and it wasn't until the main road was paved in March 2015 that the Secret Beach was a secret no longer. Now, especially on the weekends, this area is a top destination for locals and visitors alike, and of course, half the fun is getting there! Why not load up the golf cart with friends, family and maybe even a cooler stocked with your favorite beverages, and head north for a day of exploring and fun? There are also a great variety of bars and restaurants along the main road that make for fun stops along the way. Heck the entire day can easily be spent on this expedition!

As if this gorgeous beach wasn't enough to make the area a key destination, the new Pirate's Not-So-Secret Beach Bar & Grill just upped the ante! You know the beach is going to be awesome, and you KNOW this new bar and grill is going to be amazing, and why is that you may ask? Owner Maresha Reid has quite the track record for creating not only fantastic food but memorable experiences. This pint-sized, award-winning chef just wowed the judges at

Continued on Page 17



**The Palmilla Restaurant
& Admiral Nelson's Bar**
Dinner Reservations: 226-2067



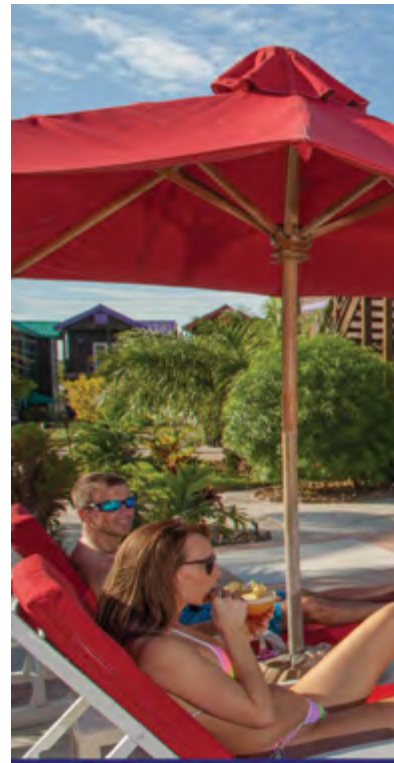
Not-So-Secret Beach Bar & Grill

Continued from Page 16

the annual Taste of Belize chef's competition, taking second place against some very stiff competition. Known for her signature lionfish dishes, her Pirate's Treasure Restaurant and Bar in the Tres Cocos Area of Ambergris Caye is renowned for authentic Belizean dishes and her very popular Chef's Table experience. Maresha now shares this same passion with her new beach bar, and the setting couldn't be more perfect for relaxing, enjoying delicious cocktails and sinking your teeth into some amazing food, most of it prepared on an outside fire pit.

Offering a tasty lunch menu with tough choices like Sweet Chili Shrimp Skewers, Garlic Ginger Butter Lobster Tail, Coconut Husk Smoked Pork Chops, Coconut Ginger Curry Chicken or Shrimp, Honey Orange Glazed Chicken and Honey Orange Grilled Wings, it's a great idea to order a few of these temptations and share with your party. Each item comes with a choice of two side dishes, such as grilled corn on the cob, baked beans, coconut rice or sautéed green beans. Our favorites? It's all so good, it's hard to pick one, but the smoked pork chop sent us over the moon! Super tender, juicy and packed with grilled goodness, we loved every bite! The grilled wings were full of honey-orange flavor, the succulent sweet chili shrimp skewers were delightful bites of heaven, and need I say anything more than 'grilled lobster tail in garlic ginger butter'? Of course, yummy libations are in order and they take an island favorite, the "Panti Rippa" to a new level with coconut rum, fresh pineapple and sour sop juice. Their Pirate's Rum Punch is a treat even Jack Sparrow would approve of, and why not play some corn hole while being a beach bum? They also have a volleyball net in the water and other water toys to enjoy. If you've been out fishing, Maresha is also happy to grill your catch of the day! Needless to say, this is one perfect place to catch the sunset, and after the golden globe bids you adieu, it's time to take the party back to town.

To get to Secret Beach, simply follow the paved road north over the Sir Barry Bowen Bridge until the pavement ends, stay on the road until you see a sign for Secret Beach (approximately three miles), turn left at the sign and follow the signs on the dirt road for another 3.4 miles. Be sure you have a full tank of gas, and other necessities for being out all day, the ride from San Pedro Town usually takes a little more than an hour. Pirate's Not-So-Secret Beach Bar & Grill is open every day, 10AM till sunset, and they accept Master Card & Visa. You can also find them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/piratesnotsosetbeachbarandgrill>.



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Day Tripping from La Isla Bonita: *Be Prepared!*

By Tamara Sniffin



The classic Boy Scout motto “Be Prepared” could not be better words of advice for those planning a day trip. Be it a day of fishing, manatee watching, cave tubing, or a jungle trip to exotic Maya archeological sites, there are a few things to remember that will make your experience all the more enjoyable. Although some of these tips may seem obvious, it is easy to overlook them in the excitement of your anticipated adventure!

If you have reserved your trip through your hotel or a tour business, you will most likely have a voucher. Many of these businesses list on their vouchers what they recommend you bring. Chances are you will be traveling by boat and there are things you should prepare for, and please don’t forget to bring your voucher when you board the boat.

Most excursions pick up people at the docks along the front beach and people who hold things up ultimately make the trip late. That said, if you are waiting to be picked up at 7a.m. don’t panic at 7:30 that you missed the boat. Chances are your charter was held up for a dozen different reasons. When a boat does arrive, be sure to find out where it is going, as there are

several different tour companies and tours offered on the island. If you are transported by motorboat, you can expect wind, sun and ocean spray. The combination of all three can leave you feeling like you just tangoed with a tornado. If you have long hair, plan on tying it back. Hats are always a good idea, but if you cannot secure it on your head, be prepared to hang on to it! Don’t forget your sunscreen, and if you are swimming during the trip you should reapply often. Even on a cloudy day the sun can filter through, and with the reflection on the water you can get a lot of sun without realizing it. If you are wearing shorts don’t forget to apply sunscreen to the tops of your legs and feet, you will be in a sitting position on the boat and these sensitive “haven’t seen the light of day” areas tend to burn fast!

Most boats do not have rest rooms, so be sure to take care of business before boarding, or you may find yourself in an embarrassing “over-the-boat” moment. Remember, many of the rides into the main land take well over an hour and can be on choppy waters. Early morning trips can be a bit chilly, and a light, long-sleeved shirt can provide warmth, as well as sun protection. Depending on the weather, there can be a good amount of ocean spray, so it is possible that whatever you wear and bring along might get wet. A zip lock bag works great to protect your valuable camera and other items, and of course a beach towel can come in handy too.

If you are on a snorkeling trip you should be sure that a) you have your equipment, b) you rented equipment or c) the tour is providing you with equipment. If you are a first time snorkeler, remember that the guides are there to help you, they are pros at this. If you are fishing, find out in advance what, if anything, you are expected to bring. Again, most fishing boats provide the poles

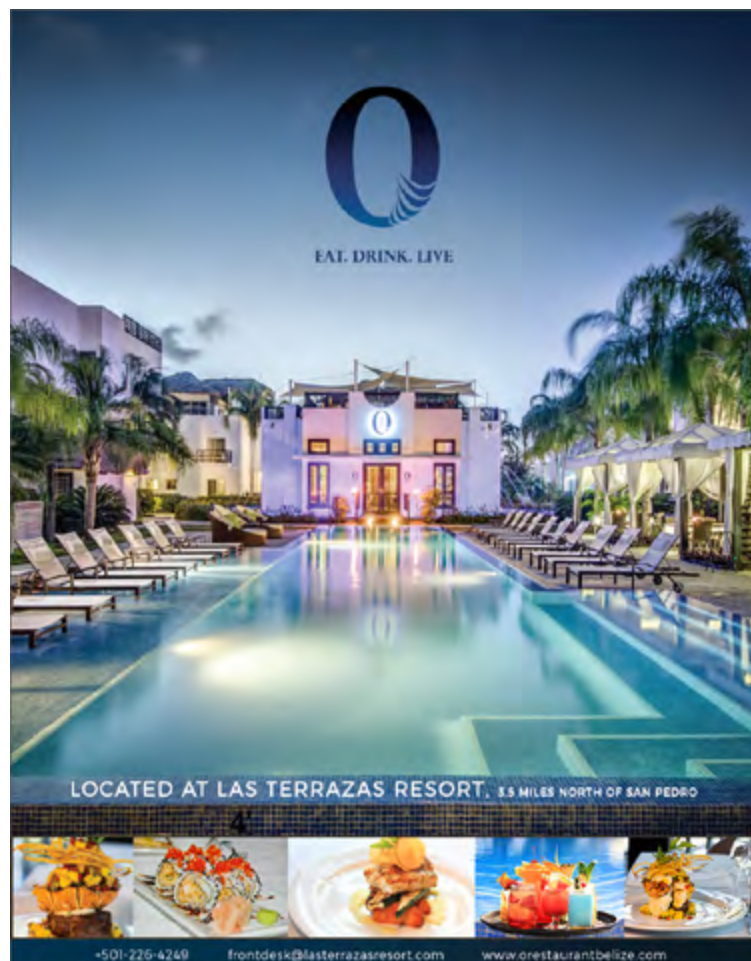
and bait.

Many of the day trips offer jungle excursions to near-by ruins or some incredible cave tubing. On any trip that involves walking, the rule of thumb is “sensible shoes”. You will be tromping through jungle pathways that can be slippery when wet, and on surfaces that are uneven. A pair of tennis shoes or a fitted Teva-like sandal is your best bet; slip-on sandals and any kind of heel is a just a bad idea.

Most tour companies will at least bring water along for their guests, and the larger companies stock their boats with coolers full of soda pop, water, Belikin beer and if you are lucky, rum punch. Most guides are attentive and generous; if they have something you need or forgot they will gladly accommodate you as best as possible.

Last, but not least, always day-trip with some cash on you. Even if the land part of your trip includes meals, you may decide you want an additional beverage at the local restaurant or come across a trinket you can’t live without. If you have enjoyed your journey, your guide will certainly appreciate a tip. Remember, this is his/her job and that he might do the same trip day after day during the peak tourist season. Was he enthusiastic, friendly and helpful? If so let him know you appreciate the way he shared his incredible world with you.

By the end of the day, you will be tired and elated by the unique experiences of the day behind you. Although you may be eager to pack in as many things in a day as possible while on your vacation, chances are that when you do return to your room, you will be ready for a shower, a low-keyed dinner and bed. Planning a big dinner (with reservations that you may be late for) and a night on the town may not sound all that exciting once you get back. Chances are you will cherish the memory of your day for many years to come, and the more prepared you are, the more you will enjoy your Belizean adventure.





From jungles to beaches: Ring in the New Year in Belize!

As the New Year approaches, we tend to start debating as to where we will be when the clock hits twelve on December 31st. Home with family? A party with friends? A romantic dinner with that special someone? Those are the most common options, but if you find yourself visiting Belize during this holiday, we have some very unique places where you can ring in the New Year. Let's face it, the typical 'party until the sun rises' for the New Year is not for everyone. Some people just want to relax in a comfortable setting with friends or family and enjoy a casual celebration.

How about at a jungle lodge nestled in the lush rainforest? For those seeking this experience, southern Belize offers an array of jungle resorts, lodges, cabins and off the beaten path vacation homes to spend the holiday. Surrounded by all that Mother Nature has blessed us with, you can truly unwind and reflect on what has passed and what is yet to come. GAIA River Lodge (info@gaiariverlodge.com) located in the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve offers exactly this. She's also home to the famous Five Sisters Waterfall. Doesn't that just sound splendid?



By Janelle Cowo



Maybe you prefer to be on a private island retreat, toasting champagne on a sandy beach as the waves gently lap the shore? With several island resorts scattered across the coast of Belize, there is definitely not a shortage to choose from. On Ambergris Caye, a perfect resort for your New Year's celebrations is Matachica Resort and Spa (info@matachica.com). Located just about five miles on Northern Ambergris Caye, Matachica offers a relaxed private experience in a gorgeous beach setting. How does sipping on a glass of champagne on the beach under the light of the New Year moon sound for a memorable evening?

And for those who just want a proper party, Belize' bars are excellent New Year's hosts. San Pedro Town holds even grander parties, with an all-night block party at Central Park! Everyone is invited to come out and celebrate along with the San Pedro Town Council as we usher 2017!

If you're motivated and ready for a fresh start, choose wisely where to ring in the 2017! Happy New Year to you, and may your new year be filled with adventures and memories in My Beautiful Belize!

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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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