

The UnBelizeable MesoAmerican Reef

* Bingo: Fine Family Fun
* Do Not Disturb: Lobsters on honeymoon!
* Belizean Arts: A shopper's paradise
* La Ruta Maya Challenge draws near



From the Editor Tamara Sniffin

Welcome to our February 2016 issue of My Beautiful Belize!



tourism to conservation.

The reef also offers a banquet of delicious sea food, with lobster always being a favorite with locals and visitors alike. Fortunately there are measures in place to regulate the fishing of this tasty crustacean and this month we "Kiss Our Lobster Goodbye" as the season closes on February 14th.

Inside you will also read about the fun of friendly competition. From playing bingo, a game of chance, at the San Pedro Lions Den, to participating in a game of challenge at the annual Ruta Maya River Race, we will have you on the edge of your seats as you read about all of the excitement.

And just to round things off with a touch of finesse, we visit one of our favorite galleries on the island, Belizean Arts. Showcasing talented Belizean artisans, we could gift shop till we drop there!

As you enjoy your travels here in our humble but mighty home, may your days be full of adventure, discovery, delicious food and afternoon naps!



For advertising and story opportunities, email us at : hello@mybeautifulbelize.com

Although our country might be small in stature, the amenities we

have to offer are HUGE! With so

many amazing adventures and

world class experiences to choose

from, one would be hard pressed to

say what our number one tourism appeal is. But, if you ask me I'd say it's

our Belize Barrier Reef System hands

down! From diving to snorkeling to

every water sport imaginable, the

reef is our playground. In this issue

we read about the important part the reef plays in our country; from

Be sure to visit our website for detailed stories and many more beautiful photos: www.mybeautifulbelize.com Published by The San Pedro Sun LTD.

SuDoku Time! Answers on Page 10

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Wolfe's Woofers

By: Dennis Wolfe Number Two

"It's been one of those days," my friend Bob said. "This morning I sent my

vard man to the store for thumbtacks and he came back with Tampax." "Joe Miller used to play guitar with me," I told him. "He always said Belize

is not a Third World country. It's a Third Word country. We use so many languages that we all understand about every third word we say to each other.'

Bob laughed and then he said, "Hey, you're coming to my anniversary party; Right?" Your second year anniversary? | TWO."

Weh Di Go Ahn February on La Isla Bonita

food, drinks

February 14th

February 20th

February 13th-14th

February 5th-10th

San Pedro Carnaval, San Pedro Town

February 6th

Belmopan Rotary Charity Duck Race, Hawkesworth Bridge, San Ignacio

February 7th Kelly McGuire at the Palapa Bar Pre Super Bowl party with great food and drinks and concert from 2-5pm



February 7th Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball

Belize Biltmore Plaza, 7PM February 13th

Lionfish Derby; Barrier Reef Sports Bar and Grill, Caye Caulker Village

Fashion Fusion; Princess Ramada, Belize City, 6PM – until

February 13th-14th

7th Annual Tribute to Bob Marley, Central Park, San Pedro Town,

> wouldn't miss it." 'Will you do me a favor?" Bob asked.

"Sure. Anything you need."

"Julie has been mad since I accidentally mentioned my 1st wife last week so I'm getting a cake for the party. Will you order it in person to make sure they get it right?"

"O.K. What do you want it to say?"

"Tell them to write HAPPY ANNIVERSARY JULIE. YEAR NUMBER TWO."

"I can handle that. I have a meeting tomorrow night so I'll have them send the cake over in case I'm running late." Sure enough my meeting ran late and I got to the party half an hour late. The party was in full swing but Bob was

- sitting in a chair out on the porch.
- "How is the party?" I asked. "Not too good," he said.

He turned his head to show me a fresh cut lip and the beginnings of a black eye.

'Whew! What happened?"

The Best

"Julie punched me because of that cake you ordered."

- "Why would she be angry about the cake?"
- He took me inside to look at the cake.

Adventures hy

It read, "HAPPY ANNIVERSARY JULIE. YOU'RE NUMBER



Page 2 My Beautiful Belize, A Visitor's Guide - San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, Belize



Baron Bliss Regatta, Birds Isle **Belize City**

Live music, entertainment, arts,

Placencia Sidewalk Arts and Mu-

Lions Valentines Beach Party,

Maya Mountain Adventure Chal-

lenge. Starts at Cahal Pech Re-

A Puro Tango - Live dance and

music show at the Paradise

Theater (NICH sponsored)

sort, San Ignacio, 6AM

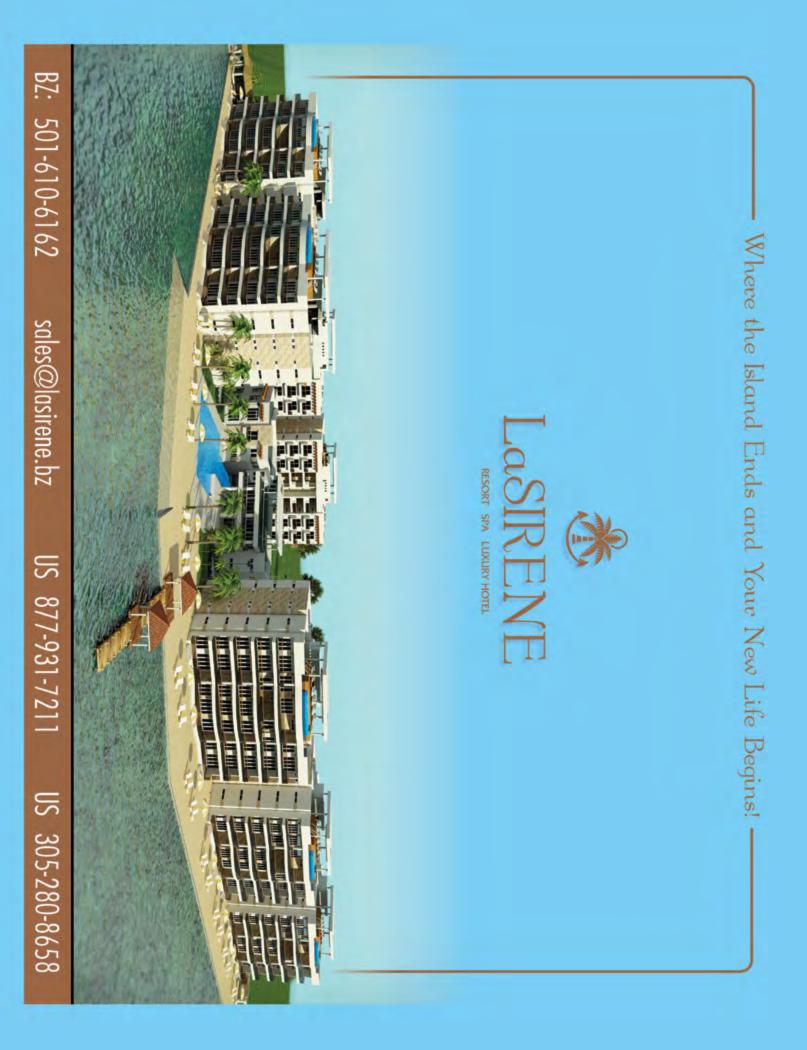
February 20th – 21st

March 5th – 6th

Boca Del Rio, San Pedro Town

sic Festival, Placencia Sidewalk

February 2016



The UnBelizeable MesoAmerican Reef



How is it that our tiny country of Belize is blessed with so many treasures? You may think we are exaggerating when we boast that we have it all, proudly claiming that not only do we have stunning Maya archeological sites, glorious jungles, misty mountains, gorgeous flora and fauna and the friendliest people you'd ever want to meet, but we are also home to the second-to-none Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System! Well, that might be a tiny exaggeration...we are second-to-one: the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, but hey, that's in another hemisphere!

If you are lucky enough to fly along the coast of Belize, either to Ambergris Caye or south all the way to Punta Gorda, you will follow the coral chain of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef

NI CARLES HAR

ESCAPE WITH US AND ENJOY

LUNCH & DINNER DAILY!

System. The system stretches an impressive 700 miles from the northern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, along Belize, Guatemala and down through the Honduran Bay Islands. However, Belize has the distinct honor of being home to 80% of this system, and along with three offshore atolls, several hundred cayes, mangrove forests, coastal lagoons and estuaries it is collectively termed the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System. In 1996 the Belize Barrier System was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, something we are very proud of, and there are now seven protected areas within the reef.

Each year our beautiful coral crown attracts thousands of divers and snorkelers who enjoy exploring the underwater **Continued on Page 5**



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Pizzas Ceviche

Wings

& more!

2 Miles North at Grand Carbe Resor

Page 4 My Beautiful Belize, A Visitor's Guide - San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, Belize

PH: 663-9766 HAPPY HOUR 2PM-5PM CLOSED ON TUESDAYS

The UnBelizeable MesoAmerican Reef

Continued from Page 4

MAHOGANY BAY

wilderness of the reef. With over 65 species of stony coral (marine animals that live on the seabed and build themselves a hard skeleton), 350 species of mollusks and more than 500 species of fish calling the reef home, underwater exploration is a colorful, exciting experience. The Belize Barrier Reef System is home to one of the world's largest populations of West Indian Manatees, with an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 population. These manatees, along with many other species within the reef system are endangered or under some degree of protection, including Green, Loggerhead, Leatherback and Hawksbill turtles, Queen Conch, Spiny lobster, Parrot Fish, the American crocodile, the Morelet's Crocodile, the Nassau grouper, Elkhorn coral, and black coral.

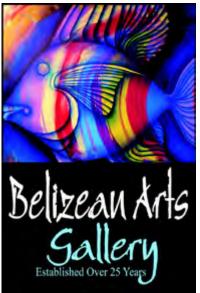
Continued on Page 6

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Open Daily -Deep Inside Fido's Courtyard Barrier Reef Drive, San Pedro Town





The UnBelizeable MesoAmerican Reef

Reef recreation isn't limited to submersed discovery, as sailors, swimmers, kite and wind surfers, paddle-boarders, kayakers, fishermen and water lovers from around the world revel in her beauty. The scenic allure of our coastal areas makes Belize a prime tourist destination, where enjoying the view of the reef from the comfort of a beachside hammock can be equally as wonderful.

Chances are that while you are busy blowing bubbles with the fishes, or playing along this ribbon of coral, it is easy to forget that the reef is far more than just another pretty face. Our marine Mama fiercely protects our shorelines from tidal damage and holds steady against hurricane forces. And, did you know that the reef system includes vital sea grass and mangrove habitats that also serve to filter water from coral-suffocating sediment while preventing erosion? When water currents carry eggs and larvae from the reef into the mangrove forests, the root system serves as a critical nursery for fish and other marine wildlife. The safety within the tangle of roots allows them to grow to a safe size before venturing out to the sea **Continued on Page 11**



Top-Rated on TripAdvisor! SUNSET WINE BAR

WINE BAR Unique portfolio of wines

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> www.stellasmile.com FB Stella's Smile

Mile One, North of the Bridge PH: 602-5284





RAIN RESTAURANT - 2 Miles North at Grand Caribe. World cuisine, two dining atmospheres: indoor semi-formal and outdoor rooftop casual dining. Serving from 7AM - LATE! Happy Hour: 1-3PM, Mon-Sun. 226-4000 or email reservations@rainbelize.com.



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 coconuthusk 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!

STELLA'S SMILE is a lagoon-front boutique wine cafe just one mile north of the bridge. Not the traditional "beach bar", Stella's offers

PLAY



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!



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.



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 4-11PM closed on Tuesdays.

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 bear tour, just 1/2mile North

complementary water toys, just 1/2mile North of the bridge. 226-3365/625-3364

SHOP



MATA GRANDE GROCERY - The biggest little grocery store in San Pedro, located

4.5 miles North it's a must see! Stop by for breakfast or lunch at Aurora's Grill (local food). Open Mon-Sat8AM-5PM; Sun 10AM-5PM. Order online at www.matagrandegrocery.com or call us at 226-4290....we DELIVER!

δταγ

EL SECRETO is a barefoot luxury resort comfortably secluded just miles north of San Pedro. Dine at the most beautiful setting on the island and discover the secret flavors of Miss Miguela's kitchen! Offering a variety of International food with a Belizean touch. Call 236-5111. a distinctive portfolio of wines and authentic cuisine in a relaxed setting. Call 602-5284 or visit www.stellasmile.com.

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.

JOHN'S ESCAPE!!! Run away and get served lunch and dinner daily. Pizzas, Nachos, Burgers, Quesadillas, Burritos, Fajitas, Ceviche, Chicken Wings (to die for!) and much more!! Happy Hour 2pm-5pm; closed on Tuesday.

MAMBO RESTAURANT - Enjoy a unique dining experience at this award-winning restaurant at Matachica 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.

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 Ambergris 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.

IMPORTANT #s

Police - 206-2022 / Fire - 206-2372 South Police Sub-Station - 610-4911 Emergency - 911 Crimestoppers - 800 922-TIPS Dr. Otto Rodriguez San Pedro Polyclinic II - 226-2536. Emergency: 660-2871 US Embassy - 822-4011 Canadian Consulate - 223-1060 British High Commissioner – 822-2146

Sudoku Answers Puzzle on Page 2

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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.



JAMBEL'S JERK PIT: Specializing in Jamaican-Belizean Cuisine. Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner: 7AM - 9PM Daily. Wednesdays: 6-9PM - ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFETT with Live Reggae Music! Saturday Nights – Live Music! Swing by

for that IRIE DINING EXPERIENCE! 226-3515.

Located off the Beach at the Sun Breeze Suites. Like us on Facebook.

MELT CAFÉ AND BEACH BAR: Across from the Wet Willy's Dock on the Boca Del Rio Beachfront. Open 7 days a week, 7am-midnight, serving Breakfast and Lunch until 10pm. Large Breakfast selection includes our Famous Huevos Ranche-



ros, Lunch includes Artisan Grilled Cheese Sandwiches and more. Full bar, HD TV's and free WiFi.



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.



MY SECRET DELI: "Discover the Secrets of Good Taste" With over 10 years of serving San Pedro and all its visitors, My Secret Deli is the #1 place to get a taste of local cuisine that meets international taste. Choose from a

full menu of local/international dishes, steaks, salads and soups. 226-3223.

TRANSPORTATION



DC ISLAND SCOOTER: We are located on Barrier Reef Dr (Front Street), right across from the Thomas Hotel and Island Movie. We offer scooter rentals by the hour, day,

and week. There are no restrictions on where the scooter can go (except the water). Stop by, ride the breeze and explore Isla Bonita. 652-0307.



TIME OUT CART RENTAL - "Time to get your Cart!" Brand New 4 seater and 6 seater carts. 🚡 LOWEST rates in town! Contact: 226-4855 / 632-7272. Email: timeoutrental@gmail.com

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Belize





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BELIZE CHOCOLATE COMPANY: The first ever chocolate boutique in Belize, makes bean to bar chocolate on Ambergris 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.

OASIS SPA – Relax, Refresh, Renew with our variety of treatments, including pre-natal massages, deep tissue, aromatherapy and more. On the pier at Fido's Courtyard. 226-4252, oasisspabelize@gmail.com. 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

PARTY PARTY



LUNA LOCA-Coolest place to party on the beach in

to

San Pedro. Drink, Dance, Party, Get Loca! Serving a wide variety of tropical cocktails. Saturday Night: Free To Be @ Luna Loca. Mon - Tue: 11:00 am - 12:00 am, Thu - Sun: 11:00 am - 12:00 am. 637-2412.

WAHOO'S LOUNGE - We are



day 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, Pickleback Shots,



Tequila Shot Chillers. KARAOKE FREE ZONE. Across from Belize Bank on Front TRAVELLERS

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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 10am - 9pm. 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!

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



AA Meetings: Tel: 627-1585. English Meetings: 'Boca Del Rio': Mon - Sat: 6PM - 7PM (#5 Boca Del Rio Dr). 'Clean & Serene': Tues & Fri, noon, Catholic Church Parish Hall. UltraMar Group (Spanish): T/W/F/Sun: 7:30PM, San Pablo Church. Belize Tourism Board - 227-2419. Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA) - 227-5717.

Belize Hotel Association - 223-0669, bha@btl.net San Pedro Tourist Guide Association 226-2391.





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.

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.





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



ISLAND TIME BEACH BAR: South eastern corner of Royal Caribbean Resort; offers a fun time to all. Serving Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner. Local & International Cuisine. Hours Mon - Sun: 7:00 am - 9:00 pm. Visa, Mastercard and Cash accepted. Parking Provided. 629 2551

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.



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.

AR'

CRAZY CANUCKS BEACH BAR: Beach bar located at Exotic Caye Beach Resort. Open daily11am-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



AVERAGE JOE'S: World Famous Wings with 26 different flavors to choose from! Fully stocked bar and cold beer. Join our Karaoke Party Sundays 8pm. Free Pool table. Open 4-midnight. Closed Mondays. Located next to south gas station. 601-2969 Facebook: Average Joes.

NIOUE OFFERINGS



CAYE COFFEE ROASTING COMPANY: Local fresh roasted coffee manufactured in San Pedro Town. Available throughout Ambergris Caye and countrywide. M-F: 8:30-4:30, Sat: 8:30noon. ONLINE WEB STORE, NOW OPEN!!! For more information visit http:/www.cayecoffee.bz.

CHANGES IN LATITUDES: Welcome to the best Bed & Breakfast getaway in San Pedro: just 150 feet from the Caribbean Sea and a 10-minute stroll from town. Fresh complementary Daiquiri from Island Daiquiri Bar. We are sure to provide the change of pace you've been longing for. Rejuvenate your senses and your soul - Come stay with us. (501) 226-2986.



MAHOGANY BAY: The new heart of the Caribbean and the base camp for your Belize adventure! Hotel, residences, village; starting at 184,900USD. Email info@mahoganybayvillage.com for more information.

LA SIRENE RESORT AND SPA: Located on the southern tip of Ambergris Cave and now under construction, La Sirene which is expected to be a luxury resort and spa offering utmost security and exclusivity. La Sirene is where the island ends and your new life begins! For more information visit www.lasirene.bz

Flamingo tongue sea snail

The UnBelizeable MesoAmerican Reefl

Continued from Page 6



615-9656 Info@Islanddreamtours.com

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grass beds, and eventually back to the reef from where they began. Sea grass also serves as a food source for many animals, with turtles and sea cows (manatees) grazing on the grass bed prairie. Each component of the system is essential to the health and survival of the reef. It is an impressive thing that coral reefs are the largest structures in the world created by living organisms. Imagine all these creatures working together to create such a beautiful, symbiotic society...maybe we should be taking notes?

Ambergris Caye and Caye Caulker have close access to the Belize Barrier Reef with less than a 20-minute boat ride to your snorkel or dive destination. On Ambergris the reef is less than a half a mile off the windward side of the island, where as in other popular destinations in Belize the reef can be as far as 20 miles away. Where ever you are staying, discovering the crystal clear Caribbean waters surrounding our barrier reef is an experience not to be missed.



How do you spell community fun?



Not every Friday night consists of hitting the nightclubs or bars along the beach and scattered through town. In fact, for a lot of families looking to relax while being entertained, the San Pedro Lions' Den is the place to be. What could possibly be the attraction, you may wonder?

Well, it's Bingo and BBQ time!

From 7PM onwards, Lion Members tend to Bingo cards and call out numbers to those sitting attentively at their tables. Families, friends, visitors, all kinds of folks join in on the fun. Each game costs \$2BZ, with a middle and final game costing \$5 where you can win more. Depending on the size of the crowd each game can garner up to \$100 or more, with the \$5 games adding up to as much as \$400!

Drinks are served at the bar, as part of the fundraising of the evening, and if you are lucky

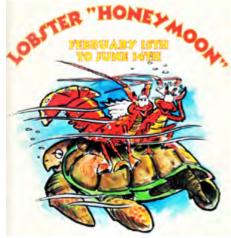
enough, there is BBQ to enjoy: chicken, beans, coleslaw and hot tortillas make a hearty meal while you play your favorite Bingo card. At three beers for just \$10 and local rum drinks at the same bargain price, you just cannot go wrong! Talk about a fun and easy activity to enjoy with friends or as a family!

The Lion's Den is located on the northern end of Barrier Reef Drive in the heart of San Pedro Town.



For the Love of Lobster! By Janelle Cowo

While many only observe February 14th as the day of love, here in Belize it also marks the closing of the Lobster Season. That's right, the ability to fish for or indulge in this delectable crustacean closes after Valentine's Day. The Spiny Lobster is sought out across Belize as one of the top sea-food platters, but in order to ensure generations to come can still enjoy this marine critter, the Belize



Government, through the Fisheries Department implements a fishing season to allow our tasty lobsters to re-populate.



The Spiny Lobster (Panulirus argus) open season runs from midnight of June 14th to midnight of February 14th. After the season closes, any person found in possession of lobsters will be prosecuted in accordance with 3(1)(b) of the Fisheries Regulations,

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Chapter 210 of the Subsidiary Laws of Belize Revised Edition 2000-2003. During this time, all lobster traps need to be removed from the water, and restaurants need to deplete their lobster inventory within a two week grace period.

The four month closed season is prime spawning and breeding time for the Spiny Lobster. After hatching it takes up to three years for a lobster to reach full maturity. In Belize it is also illegal to catch berried lobster (with eggs) or undersized lobsters (if they are under 3.5 inches in the carapace length they are still considered juvenile) throughout the year. Penalties for breaking a lobster related law can result in a six month imprisonment or up to a \$1,000 in fines.

So take consideration and follow the law. After all it's only a short four months... and when the season opens up with the Annual Lobster Festivals, there will be loads of lobster for everyone to enjoy!



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Nestled inside Fido's Courtyard, and filled with unimaginable treasures, Belizean Arts truly speaks to my heart.

With its art covered walls, paintings at every turn, and display cases showcasing colorful, shiny, beautiful pieces of jewelry, elaborately embroidered pillowcases, rugs and more... it's a true bohemian lover's paradise.

There really is something for everyone; from the easy-to-please to the have-everything person in your life. There's always a reason to stop in, browse, shop and leave happy.

Jewelry:

G o I d - p I a t e d, s e m i - p r e c i o u s stones, hand-crafted pieces that stand alone, or blend right in with a few of your favorites...rings,

bracelets, earrings, necklaces... oh what a wonderful treasure trove of goodies! Seriously, this is my favorite section in the store.... most of my Christmas, birthday and Valentine's Day presents have come from this place. They are some of my most cherished items – and your significant other will definitely appreciate a trinket or two from here!

Crafts:

From hand-carved wooden pieces, embroidery, beaded purses, key chains, wooden bowls, fabulous notebooks and brilliant hand-painted silks by the talented Lee Vanderwalker, there's a unique piece for everyone. **Paintings:**

These belong in their own category, because the room is chock-a-block with gorgeous pieces: oils, watercolors and impressionist paintings of every size and style! Papo, Walter Castillo, Leo Vasquez, Chuy...these painters immortalize classic Belizean scenes, personalities and wildlife on canvas, in all sizes so you can pack and carry at your convenience.



ByMary Gonzalez

Belizean Arts is open daily from 9AM – 10:30PM, and located conveniently inside Fido's Courtyard on Barrier Reef Drive.



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The race of a life time: La Ruta Maya Challenge

By Janelle Cowo

Ready, set, paddle! The 18th Annual La Ruta Maya River Challenge, undoubtedly the most grueling canoe race in Belize, is less than a month away. Scheduled to take place from Friday, March 4th to Monday, March 7th, this test of stamina, endurance and strength will take racers through a 180-mile route along the Macal River in the Cayo District to the Belize River in the Belize District. Excited yet?

In true Belizean style, the La Ruta Maya River Challenge is not only a weekend-long race, but also a weekend-long festive celebration of National Heroes and Benefactors Day, which falls on Wednesday, January 9th but is being observed on Monday. The race takes both participants and spectators through some of the most outstanding sceneries in the country. Of course cheering on those brave paddlers requires some incentives – how about beer, cocktails, classic Belizean eats and even live music? Yup, you are sure to find a party at the several stations of the race or pretty much at any point along the race route you choose.

But how did the La Ruta Maya River Challenge come to be? The race was founded by Richard Harrison of Big-H Enterprises to launch Vida

brand purified water back on March 9, 1998. The race then evolved into an opportunity to bring many partners with similar interests together to build an event that could allow for promotional themes of 'natural products' identified with sports, endurance, nutrition, and well-being.

The race kicks off at the foot of the Hawkesworth Bridge in the Twin Towns of Santa Elena/San Ignacio, Cayo and makes its way to Banana Bank Lodge outside of Belmopan. On the second day, the paddlers continue from Banana Bank Lodge to Double Head Cabbage Village on the Belize River. On day three, racers make their way along the Belize River, ending in Burrell Boom Village. On the last day, paddlers push through the final stretch from Burrell Boom to the Belchina Bridge in Belize City.

The race has become such an iconic event for Belize that it now attracts both participants and visitors from across the Caribbean and Central America! So mark your calendars, as this is definitely a 'can'tmiss event!' With so many stops along the way over four days, you'll know you can catch culture, exploration and sports all in one!



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