



My *Beautiful* Belize

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

| JULY/AUGUST 2016 | Vol. 04 #07 | FREE |

**Steel Pans are
the sound of
the Caribbean!**

ALSO INSIDE:

- * Kids' summer in Belize
- * Getting around Belize is half the fun!
- * Our National Animal: the Baird's Tapir
- * The scenic Hummingbird Highway
- * Tour Marie Sharp's Hot Sauce factory
- * The International Costa Maya Festival is set!



From the Editor *Tamara Sniffin*

The Art of Sign Painting



Back in the day billboards and business signs were hand painted, often evolving into a form of art. These signs are no comparison to computer generated graphics, which can lack vibrance and creativity. In some areas of the country where excessive signage can result in visual clutter, it is the hand painted ones that stand out the most, and in San Pedro that couldn't be more true.

Fortunately, there are a handful of artisan sign painters on the island whose works perpetuate the lost art, and Trinidadian brothers Lenny and Neville Bonardy are some of the best around. When it came time for a My Beautiful Belize wall sign at the San Pedro Roman Catholic School downtown, we knew they were the guys for the job. We wanted to showcase our publication in the prettiest way possible!

These super talented brothers took their training as commercial artists in Port of Spain and they are also gifted musicians, as were their father and brothers. They play instrumental music in many Latin styles under the name "Mangrove Riddums," and for many years were resident musicians in Venezuela.

Their distinctive style sets the signs they paint apart from all others, and we are grateful to be a "collector" of their work. Thank you Lenny and Neville!

Be on the lookout for our wall sign on Tarpon Street, and snap and share a selfie with us! We'd love to feature it as photo of the day on www.mybeautifulbelize.com!

SuDoku Time! *Answers on Page 15*

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Wolfe's Woofers

By: Dennis Wolfe

Old Boots



"How was it downtown?" I asked Sherry.

"It was the usual for Monday," she said. "I had to circle the block three times to find a parking space near the town board."

"I'm just glad it was you and not me," I said.

"Speaking of circling the block," she said, "I took the shortcut home and passed Mario's house. He has a sign out front that says, Boat For Sale. I wonder what's up with that."

"A boat? Mario has never owned a boat. The most expensive thing he owns is that old weedwacker he uses to cut our grass."

When I went into town to pick up lunch I drove by Mario's. Sure enough there was a sign that said, Boat For Sale. It even had a price. \$175."

Mario was sitting on the front porch and he said, "Hey, Mr. Dennis. What's up?"

"I saw your sign that says Boat For Sale," I said.

"Yeah, I got to raise money for child support for my other woman's baby," he said. "The judge said so."

"Tell me about the boat."

"I gon' sell de boat for \$175."

"I might be interested," I told him. "Tell me about it."

"Well, I got one weedwacker for \$125."

"What about the boat?"

"I got a bicycle is \$50."

"Mario, I never heard of you having a boat. Are you sure you even have a boat?"

"Yes, Mr. Dennis. I got a weedwacker and a old bicycle and dem boat for sale."

Weh di go ahn eena July & August

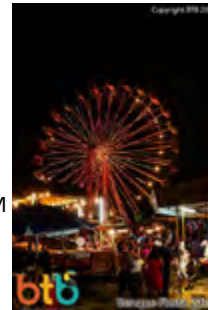


July 12th-14th – Belize 3D Workshop – Dealing with Difficult Dogs at Saga Humane Society, San Pedro Town from 10AM

July 14th – Flor de la Feria Pageant at Cancha Marshallack, Benque Viejo del Carmen Town from 7PM

July 16th – Monthly Farmers Market at The Truck Stop, Ambergris Caye from noon to 3PM

July 16th – Benque Fiesta at Cancha Marshallack, Benque Viejo del Carmen Town from 4PM



July 16th – The Rising Entrepreneur Gala at Best Western Biltmore Plaza Belize, Belize City from 6PM

July 18th-21st – Ancient World Week at Corozal House of Culture (details at 422-0071)

July 23rd – Don't stop the Music with Lord Rhaburn at Dangriga Town Central Park, from 3PM

July 29th-31st – Sugar City's Fiestarama 2016 at the People's Stadium, Orange Walk Town from 6PM each day

August 4th-6th – Tres Pescados Slam Tournament in San Pedro Town (more info at belizefly.com)



August 4th-6th – International Costa Maya Festival at the Honourable Louis Sylvester Sporting Complex, San Pedro Town gate open at 7PM each night

August 6th – Island Invasion "Endless Summer" at Fido's Restaurant and Bar from 10PM

August 6th-7th – Lagoon-Reef Eco Challenge, Ambergris Caye

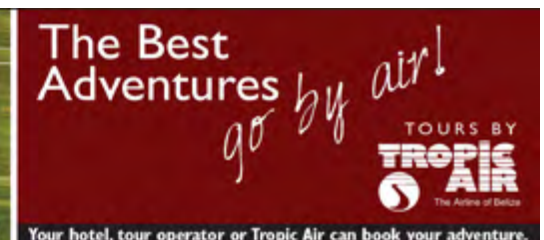
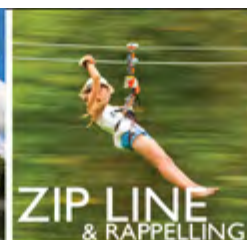
August 13th – National Song Competition 2016 at Memorial Park, Belize City from 7:30PM

August 27th – Orange Walk Tourism Expo at Orange Walk Town at the Orange Walk Central Park from 8AM

September 3rd – Miss San Pedro Pageant at Honourable Louis Sylvester Sporting Complex from 7PM



September 3rd – Belize Carnival King and Queen Competition at Rodger's Stadium, Belize City from 5PM



The Sound of the Caribbean: Steel Pans!

By Janelle Cowo



FUN FACT: Did you know that the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago is the steel pan?

Music is clearly something that most people can't live without – I know I can't. It speaks a different language to every individual, and culturally music lovers find themselves drawn to the sounds they grew up with. That is what steel pan music is to our community – enjoyable music with a cultural background. Steel pan music is a soulful, playful, all-around Caribbean sound that calls to you no matter where you are from!

Belize is unique, in that she

has both Central American and Caribbean ties. Our Caribbean side is often shown in our food, drinks, clothing and especially, our music. Steel pan music originated on the island of Trinidad and Tobago, but is now found across almost all Caribbean destinations.

If you're not familiar with steel pan music, all you need to know is that talented musicians use straight sticks tipped with rubber to drum 55 gallon industrial containers that for-

merly contained chemicals. The music that is produced is one of a kind and a treat to one's ears. The array of music that can be played using steel pans is truly endless – I have heard everything from reggae to pop, soca to bachata and even classical! Of course it takes a talented musician to play these pans, but it doesn't take years to learn! In Belize, some of the best steel pan musicians are still in primary school!

Continued on Page 4



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BELIZEAN COVE ESTATES

The sounds of the Steel Pan

Continued from Page 3



The steel pan music spot light in Belize is shared by five main groups: The Pantempts Steel Orchestra; Panerrixx Steel Band; Pandemonium Steel Band; The Allstars Steel Band, and the Dynamix Steel Band. In addition, several schools have their own bands as part of their music program.

But how did steel pan music

make its way to Belize? Well it was a program instilled to help "at risk" youth be productive with their time. The initiative was spear-headed by the Institute of Creative Arts' Music Department, a newly formed department tasked with increasing the quantity and the level of proficiency of Belizean youth playing music, with a generous do-

nation from UNICEF and the social guidance of RESTORE BELIZE. That program blew up into the musical phenomenon it is today.

Steel pan music has become so influential in the country that the Governor General of Belize, His Excellency Sir Colville Young, organizes an annual steel pan concert. The 'Pan Yaad Concert' has been

delighting Belizeans since 2009, as part of our September Celebrations (yes, Belizeans we celebrate our independence for an entire month!). The concert is held at the House of Culture in Belize City, and it is full of color, movement and patriotic spirit. Oh! How I love the Pan Yaad Concert!

Continued on Page 5

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The sounds of the Steel Pan

Continued from Page 4

This year's Pan Yaad Concert is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 18th. Mark your calendars, because this is an event you don't want to miss! And wherever in the Caribbean you may be, and you hear those tinny sounds starting up, dancing is encouraged!



About the House of Culture

With exquisite colonial architecture and an even richer history, the House of Culture, better known as the Government House, is one of the most important buildings in Belize. Located on

Regent Street in Belize City, the building was erected in 1814 when Belize was still British Honduras and under British rule. It was the residence of the Governor General (the British Monarchy representative) until 1998, when The Government House was opened to the public and renamed the House of Culture.

Summer in Belize

Kids can have fun here too!

For children, summer vacation = no school, which makes it the perfect time for those long family vacations. Summer camps offer the perfect opportunity for your children to enjoy their time off while learning new skills and cultures!

By Janelle Cowo

Corozal Town



The northernmost district in the Belize is known for its rich Mestizo culture and each summer, the Corozal House of Culture hosts their Summer Art Wave Camp with this in mind. Youth from across the district are invited to participate in this free program, aimed at rekindling their cultural ties. Divided into three separate workshops, Summer Art Wave has something for everyone. Are you a music lover? Well take part in the "Music Starts Here" program (runs from July 4th to the 15th and recommended for children between the ages of 7 to 10) which teaches children the key foundation of playing a recorder (flute), singing, rhythm and even reading music. Maybe you want to learn the classic dances of the proud Mestizo? If that's the case, take part in the "Mestizo Dance Workshop" (runs from July 25th to the 29th and recommended for children 10 and older) where you will learn tradition dances such as La Botella, El Torito and La Bamba. The final workshop is the "Basketry Workshop" (runs from August 1st to the 5th and recommended for teens 15 and older) where one can learn how to create baskets using natural woods and vines. Don't they all sound fun? It's a great way to get your child to experience one of the many cultures in Belize. (Please visit the Corozal House of Culture or call 422-0071 for more information and registration as space is limited).

Continued on Page 6



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BELIZEAN SHORES RESORT

Summer Camps Continued from Page 5

San Ignacio and Santa Elena Town

If you find yourself in the heart of the Cayo District, the San Ignacio & Santa Elena House of Culture will also be hosting a Summer Art Wave Camp. Their summer program will include a Corn Leaf Doll Making Workshop (runs from July 4th to 8th and recommended for children 15 and over); a Theatre and Breakdance Workshop (runs from July 18th to 22nd and recommended for children 12 and over); and a Creole Drumming and Rhythm Workshop (runs from July 25th to August 5th and recommended for participants between the ages of 9 to 24). For information on how to partake in any of these fun workshops contact 824-0783.

Orange Walk Town

Orange Walk Town— Growing up in Orange Walk Town, my summers were always busy attending one camp after another. From dance camps to reading camps, there are enough activities to entertain the young minds in Orange Walk. One of my favorites was the Dance Explosion camp (runs from July 11th to August 4th and recommended for boys and girls between the ages of 7 to 15). If you love dancing and culture, you are

made for this camp. They will teach you everything from contemporary to traditional Mestizo, Garifuna and even a couple Maya dances! To register contact the Banquitas House of Culture at 322-0517.



Continued on Page 8





Tel: 011-501-226-5010
Reservations: 011-501-223-0002
info@matachica.com



Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve
Cayo District, Belize C.A.
Tel: 501-834-4005
Email: info@gaiariverlodge.com

Summer Camps Continued from Page 6



Belize City

If your child loves dancing, then "Fusion Summer Camp" (runs from July 4th to the 22nd and is recommended for children between the ages of 4 to 16) is where they should be. Organized by the Belize National Dance Company, this summer camp

offers lots of dancing and drumming. Participants will learn modern, contemporary and folk dances as well as drumming to the beats of Belizean's Smbai, Brukdong, Punta and Paranda tunes. This camp is surely to keep your child active this summer! (For more information contact 672-2217 or 664-3296).



Belizean Arts Gallery
Established Over 25 Years
Open Daily -
Deep Inside Fido's Courtyard
Barrier Reef Drive, San Pedro Town



Paintings Jewelry Crafts
f belizeanarts.sanpedro

Belmopan City

Now this is one of my top summer camps: the Annual Family Horse Camp at Banana Bank Lodge and Belize Horseback Adventures. This is a once-in-a-life-time opportunity for you and your kids to learn about horses and how to ride them. During the four-day summer camp (July 27th to the 31st), you learn what it means to have a relationship with a horse. There is no age limit for this camp, but children seven



and under must be accompanied by an adult. (For more information contact 832-2020 or visit <http://www.bananabank.com/>).

San Pedro Town



There is no shortage of summer programs in San Pedro, especially

sports camps (to learn more on the available sports contact San Pedro Town Sports Coordinator Kent "Bob" Gabourel at 604-9013). Some of the more unique camps include the Ambergris Caye Camp Starfish (runs from July 18 to the 29th). Specializing on children with special needs, Camp Starfish is a truly unique camp unlike no other in the country. The camp caters to children with disabilities both mental and physical offering them all the fun summer camp activities (to be a part of this camp contact Dalia Alamilla at 662-7880 or Sarah Freudenberg at 600-9094 – volunteers are welcomed).



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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!



STELLA'S SMILE

a lagoon-front boutique wine cafe just one mile north of the bridge, offering a distinctive portfolio of wines and authentic cuisine in a relaxed setting. Visit us every Sunday from 8am to 2pm for our famous Crepes and Bottomless Mimosa Brunch! Call 602-6574 or visit www.stellasmile.com.

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.

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 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.



- 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.

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.



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 1/2mile 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.

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.

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.



WARUGUMA: Charming local restaurant featuring Caribbean and Latin American cuisine. Seafood, pupusas, lobster burritos, regional favorites and much more.

Serving San Pedro since 2000. Find us on TripAdvisor! Located on Buccaneer and Black Coral Street. 206-2893.



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



LUNA LOCA - Coolest place to party on the beach in 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 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. Travelers 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



UNIQUE OFFERINGS

BELIZEAN BREEZES SOAP CO.:

Home to over 160 scents of All Natural, Hand Poured soaps! From Bars to guest soaps, cupcake soaps and a ton of fun! A full line of affordable and unique jewelry and gift items. A MUST see. 9AM-8PM, 671-2025.



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, oasissspabelize@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

AQUAFINO ISLAND RESORT AND SPA: An island resort located five minutes behind Ambergris 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.

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.



Contact us for advertising & story opportunities in My Beautiful Belize: hello@mybeautifulbelize.com

Be sure to visit our website at www.mybeautifulbelize.com for detailed stories and many more beautiful photos of Belize.

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.



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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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Buses, bikes, boats and burros: getting there is half the fun!

By Tamara Sniffin



They say half the adventure is how you get there, and that couldn't be more true than when you are exploring the beautiful country of Belize. Chances are you arrived to our country via airplane, and you may even have traveled by air to your final destination within Belize, but now this is where the

real fun begins!

If you are traveling on a budget, or want to experience seeing the country through the window of a bus, this is the number one mode of distance transportation for the majority of Belizeans. Some routes offer express runs as well as standard runs that make frequent stops

along the way. There's no better way to fully immerse yourself into the local culture than on a bus. Not only will you enjoy the views as you pass through villages, mountains, savannahs and countryside, but the people watching and interacting with fellow passengers is half the fun.

Within our communities, be they large or small, bicycles get you from point A to Z. You can't help but marvel at the ingenuity of some, who you may see riding with three people onboard AND carrying a ladder! You certainly don't have to complicate your bike

Continued on Page 14



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Getting Around in Belize

Continued from Page 13



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ride to that extent, but getting around on one is just the ticket for discovering the area you are staying at. Most resorts either provide complimentary bicycles or rent them for at a very affordable rate. The freedom of having your own wheels is very liberating, and tooling around just for the heck of it or heading out for some groceries on your bike will have you feeling like a local in no time!

You may be surprised to learn that boat travel is not limited to the coast line of Belize. With the dozens of rivers and tributaries that lace the country, indigenous people have used the waterways as a means of transportation for centuries. We've come a long way from the dug-out canoe, but the boat culture is alive and well in Belize! If you are traveling to the cays, or to communities along the coast, taking a water taxi is a well-used form of transportation for Belizeans. This inexpensive and pleasant way of travel certainly feels like an adventure, and taking in the views of our gorgeous Caribbean Sea and coast along the way is an excellent opportunity to see more of Belize. Should you travel to some of the popular Maya archeological sites in the country, chances are you'll find yourself on a boat too, travelling on rivers narrow and wide that wind through thick jungle teeming with wildlife and colorful flora. Headed out to dive or snorkel? If not on a motor boat you may be lucky enough to get there via sail boat or kayak. In Belize it's all about the boat!

Continued on Page 15





Of course the more conventional, and certainly the most comfortable means of transportation when exploring the country is in a rented car. For those who have a few different destinations while staying here, and want to explore the back roads of Belize, having your own car is the way to go.

There are several car rental companies in Belize City, and the good folks at Crystal Auto Rentals offer great deals. They will pick you up and drop you at the airport and their vehicles are beautifully maintained, even throwing in a cooler with the deal! Driving in Belize is easy, with only four major highways to get you to from point A to B. Of course between those points you are sure to enjoy the scenic landscapes of our country.



Thinking about roughing it a bit or up something really new and different? In some rural areas you may find someone to rent you their burro, or there are a few resorts in the country that offer horseback riding. Talk about a fun and unique way to get around! If horses aren't your thing maybe an inner tube while cave tubing, a bungee cord while exploring the jungle, a hand-ferry across the river to the Xunantunich Maya site, a horse drawn carriage while touring Belize City or a ride with our Belizean Mennonites? There's even tour companies on the mainland that offer ATV tours, and scooter rentals on Ambergris Caye.

No matter what means of transportation you use while discovering Belize, chances are they will be great fun and a big part of your foncacion memories.

Sudoku Answers
Puzzle on Page 2

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



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The Baird's Tapir, the National Animal of Belize

By Tamara Sniffin



The Tapir (*Tapirus Bairdii*) is the largest land mammal of Central America. Known as the "mountain cow" in Belize, they are forest dwellers, active mostly at night as they forage along river banks and forest clearings. The Baird's Tapir is the national animal of Belize and is protected under the law; thus, the hunting of the tapir is illegal.

The tapir has a prehensile, long nose like an elephant or anteater, but is actually related to the horse and rhinoceros. Its general color is dusty brown with a white fringe around the eyes and lips, white tipped ears and occasional white patches of fur on the throat and chest.

This herbivore spends approximately 90% of its waking hours hunting for food. Feeding on grasses, aquatic vegetation, leaves, buds, and fruits of the low-growing shrubs. Its long, flexible upper lip and flat molars are well suited for foraging and swallowing twigs, nuts, and other tough plant tissues found throughout river basins. Tapirs have splayed, hooved toes, with four toes on the front feet and three on the hind feet, which help them walk on muddy and soft ground.

Although tapirs were once widespread, only four species endured into the modern world: three in Central America and the warmer parts of South America,

and one in Southeast Asia. Size varies between species, but most are about two meters long, stand about a meter high at the shoulder, and weigh between 550 - 600lbs. The natural lifespan of a tapir is approximately 30 years, and a single youngster is born after a gestation of about 13 months. All baby tapirs have striped-and-spotted coats for camouflage, and while they appear at first glance to be alike, there are some differences among the patterns of different species.

Tapirs are usually solitary except when mothers have young. They range over large territories and are excellent swimmers spending a fair

amount of time in forest rivers. They are also agile climbers, crashing up steep hillsides and river banks with apparent ease. When surprised, tapirs generally head for water, but will sometimes stamp their feet loudly and sometimes whistle.

Today, there are large forest reserves in Belize to protect the remaining populations, and the tapir is found in these protected areas with the exception of Guanacaste National Park and Rio Blanco. The tapir is an extra special animal for its importance to Belize. The protection of these precious animals is vital and we must all do our part in helping with the conservation process.



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HUMMINGBIRD HIGHWAY

The Most Scenic Highway in Belize

By Mary Gonzalez



After paving was completed in 1994 and the Hummingbird Highway officially became the fourth highway in Belize. The other three are the George Price Highway (Western), Phillip S. W. Goldson Highway (Northern) and the Southern Highway, which picks up where the Hummingbird ends.

Is it possible to declare a highway 'beautiful'? Because I have one in mind: the Hummingbird Highway of Belize. Much like the delicate and pretty bird it's named after, this highway winds majestically down from Belmopan City through villages, citrus groves and untouched lush jungle mountains through to Dangriga. We drive on its smooth pavement, only the wind whistling in our ears as we head to adventure, beauty, and Southern Belize.

Every time I'm driven down that highway (always a passenger, never one to drive), I feel a tug in my heart...I can't explain what it feels like to see the mountains in the distance, and up close. The Hummingbird is unique in that it is the only highway that cuts through mountains in Belize. It's nestled in a valley and edged by either citrus groves or untouched jungles. Cortez trees in full yellow bloom add a pop of color...and in May, the Mayflowers bring punches of pink to the emerald greens all around us.

All citrus travels along the Hummingbird,

and as we drive through the valley, orange orchards stretch as far as the eye can see. We slow down for the occasional orange laden truck trundling by, sometimes, we even come across a horse-drawn cart or two ambling their way up and down hills into the villages off feeder roads. Here and there, little make-shift fruit stands, or enthusiastic street-side vendors beckon you to stop and sip some fresh coconut water, or buy mangoes, or some cut fruit. Bertha's famous tamales stand is a must-pull-over-and-try... especially if you have a long way to go!

It is the perfect road to adventure, as more and more, visitors to Belize want to explore deeper into the southern part of Belize. The next time you are driving or being driven south along this highway, be sure to make a few pit stops: the St. Herman's Blue Hole and Caves, the Billy Barquadier National Park, Bertha's Tamales (no, seriously), Marie Sharp's Pepper Sauce Factory, and if you see random little signs with homemade cheeses, breads etc., do it!! I promise, you won't regret it.

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Marie Sharp's is Fiery Hot!

Located along the Hummingbird Highway is an amazing operation that can only be described as 'Fiery Hot'. Ha...okay, yes, I'm talking Marie Sharp's Hot Sauce Factory, and I promise no more cheesy jokes.

Marie Sharp's began as Melinda Pepper Sauce, and there are a lot of older generation folks who still refer to the bottles as such. Whatever you call it, the sauce remains the same, with an almost cult-like following. It is a staple on Belizean tables and a quick, easy, much-appreciated souvenir for visitors, and those who live in the US often BEG for bottles of the hot stuff.

The hot sauce market is varied, and Marie Sharp's is right there standing proud with the big guns. Japan is their #1 export client; with the green habanero sauce being their favorite. Germany and the USA are tied for second biggest client, followed closely by Switzerland and South Korea. Yes...our beloved Marie Sharp's is smokin' worldwide! It's hard not to argue that point: hand-picked and washed habaneros, hand-chopped carrots and onions, all natural ingredients with zero preservatives...Marie Sharp's has cornered the market for unique, homegrown hot sauce.

There has been so much love for this amazing product that it's even made it into the Hot Sauce Hall of Fame! That's right; Marie Sharp is the only female to be inducted into the Hot Sauce Hall of Fame, and she is from little Belize! Ms. Marie was officially awarded at the 2016 New York City Hot Sauce Expo - the only woman entrepreneur to receive the award among four others. She was also the only foreigner to be selected for the induction into the New York City Hot Sauce Hall of Fame 2016. We were so intrigued by her story, and the product's success that we paid a visit to the factory - you know, for science!

It all began in 1980, when Ms. Sharp was experimenting with fresh habanero peppers. Ranking anywhere from 100,000 to 350,000 on the Scoville Scale of heat, habaneros are a staple in Belizean cuisine. A quick sauce can be made from roasting the habaneros on hot coals, then smashing them in a mortar and pestle with a little salt, some fresh lime juice, chopped fresh onions and cilantro, a splash of water to dilute the acidity.

However, what about when you need something quick and right then and there? Enter Sharp's work. Taking the peppers, vegetables and fruits from around her farm, she crafted sauces, jams and jellies that were a hit with neighbors and friends. Ever entrepreneurial, Sharp began working on her family business alongside a single employee. Over the years, the business has expanded to over 20 employees, a 400-acre farm surrounding the production facility in Stann Creek and a delicious mix of products that include chutneys, jams and jellies, and of course, a wide variety of hot sauces at all heat levels.

Our tour of the facility was brief as production was ongoing, but we got to see where the piles of habaneros were sorted, then ground and stored in giant vats ready for prepping into bottles. The production is simple, and a true indicator that when you pour out a splash or two of the sauce onto your dish, you're getting something as close to all natural as possible. It's truly a Proud Product of Belize!



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International Costa Maya Festival

The 2016 International Costa Maya Festival is on Ambergris Caye from August 4th - 7th, and there is some Caribbean excitement in the air! That's right; the committee has secured the performance of the undisputed Queen of Soca: Alison Hinds.

In case you can't tell...I am beyond excited! On Friday, August 5th, Costa Maya is elevating our Caribbean roots once again, so you know the party is going to be till the morning. Belizeans and visitors...**GET READY TO WINE!**

Of course, we can't just overlook the pageant on Thursday August 4th. Reigning queen, Honduras' Gabriella Salazar Valle will be handing over her crown to a deserving successor after a few rounds of activities, which start from the week before as the beauty ambassadors get to tour the island and some of the mainland.



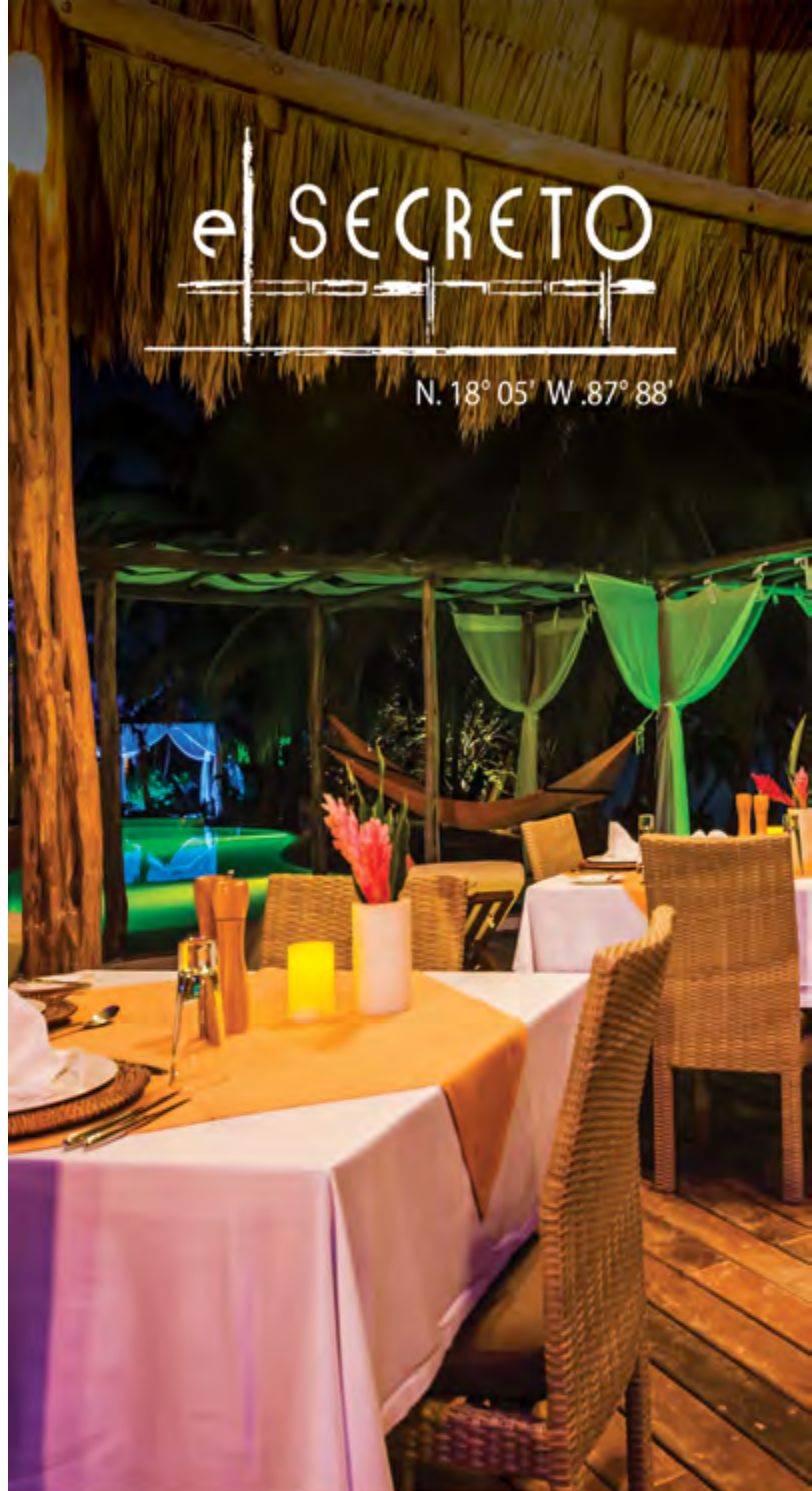
Those who haven't had their fill of live music from the Friday night soca party will be pleased to continue the fun on Saturday night (August 6th) with the fun sounds of Los Super Lamas. With a song titled "Yo quiero chupar" (I want to drink) – we think the audience may be in for another fun night!



You can choose to get tickets for the entire weekend: \$200 for adults (12+), \$60 for children (5-11), or you can pick which night calls your name the most: Pageant night will be \$50 for adults and \$30 for children, while Caribbean Night is \$100 for adults and \$30 for children. Noche Internacional will be \$100 for adults and \$30 for children.

All weekend, there will be all sorts of daytime events held by festival sponsors: beach parties, sporting events, and specials throughout the weekend. Prepare yourself for a bounty of fun!

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