



# Going Wild at The Belize Zoo

- \* Making the Coffee Connection
- \* Celebrating our town's Patron Saint
- \* San Pedro's Lobster Fest is a culinary celebration
- \* Bird's Eye View of The Belize Blue Hole

  
**My Beautiful Belize**  
**V I S I T O R   G U I D E**



| MAY 2016 | VOL. 04 #05 | FREE |



# From the Editor *Tamara Sniffin*

The best thing about writing for a travel publication like My Beautiful Belize is covering the stories. Each article contains a level of excitement, and for our journalists, these levels of enthusiasm can be off the charts!

In our May issue of My Beautiful Belize we're excited about all kinds of things. Janelle's caffeinated zeal for coffee overflows in her Making the Coffee Connection story, and how can you blame Mary for expounding on her exhilarating flight over The Blue Hole?

Collectively we were like a bunch of excited kids when we visited The Belize Zoo, gushing over the critters like they were our favorite pets. As an animal lover, I'm a sucker for a fuzzy face and love a good rescue story, so of course I was beyond excited at the zoo!



Yes, we are excited at the zoo!  
(l-r) Tamara, Mary and Janelle

Chances are that as you embark on your vacation here in Belize you are full of excitement too! Have you counted the days before arriving? Are you on the edge of your seat in anticipation of your pending adventures? We promise not to disappoint, so welcome to My Beautiful Belize, where you'll be sure to get your fill of excitement!

## SuDoku Time! Answers on Page 19

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## Wolfe's Woofers

By: Dennis Wolfe

### Mail Order Bride



"Mr. Dennis, come have some beers with us," Luis called to me. I had just walked out onto the deck at the Holiday Hotel. I went to the table where he sat with Pedrito and said, "I think I'll stick with my coffee this morning but I will join you. How are you guys today?" "Ooh, pretty rough, boss," Pedrito said. "We been drinking all night. I got so drunk that I drank myself sober." "Hey, Pedro," Luis said. "Check this out." Two ladies at the next table had paid their bill and left a couple of Victoria's

Secret catalogs on the table. Luis handed one to Pedrito and they leafed through them.

"Man, look at this," Luis said. "I heard about them mail order brides that you can send away for. That must be what this catalog is."

"Look how cheap they are," Pedrito said. "This one here is only wearing a bra and some panties. The book says \$23.99 for the set."

"Good-looking women, too," Luis said. "I'm going to send away for this one. \$34.59."

When I realized they were serious I decided not to say anything to spoil their dreams.

This morning I met Pedro and Luis again when I walked out on the deck with my coffee. It looked like they were still fighting the same hangovers with beer.

"Hey, Mr. Dennis," Luis said, as I sat down. "How are you today?"

"I'm doing good," I told him. "I'm curious about something. A few weeks ago you and Pedrito were ordering women from a catalog. How did that work out for you?"

"It's working out great," he said.

"What?!?" I exclaimed. "Are you telling me you got a woman though the mail?"

"Not yet, boss," he said, "but her clothes got here yesterday."

## Weh Di Go Ahn eena May



**May 14<sup>th</sup>** – Taste of Belize at Mufles College Auditorium in Orange Walk Town from 8AM



**May 17<sup>th</sup>** – Project X Paint and Jet Foam Party at Hour Bar in Belize City from 8PM

**May 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Chocolate Festival of Belize at Front Street in Punta Gorda Town

**May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Placencia Sailing Regatta at Topsy Tuna Beach

Bar in the Placencia Peninsula from 9AM

**May 21<sup>st</sup>** – Miss Chiquitita Pageant at Honourable Louis Sylvester Sporting Complex in San Pedro Town from 7PM



**May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>** – Lagoon – Reef Eco-challenge begins at the Sunset Board Walk in San Pedro Town at 7AM

**May 28<sup>th</sup>** – Cayo Got Talent in down town San Ignacio Town from 7:30PM

**Police** - 206-2022 / **Fire** - 206-2372  
**South Police Sub-Station** - 610-4911

**Emergency** - 911

**Crimestoppers** - 800 922-TIPS

**Emergency**: 660-2871

**US Embassy** - 822-4011

**Canadian Consulate** - 223-1060

**British High Commissioner** - 822-2146

**Dr. Otto Rodriguez San Pedro Polyclinic II** - 226-2536.

**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.

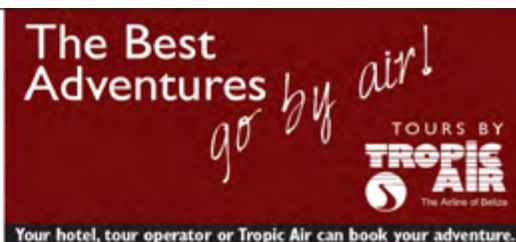
UltraMar Group (Spanish): T/W/F/Sun: 7:30PM, San Pablo Church.

**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.





# Going Wild at the Belize Zoo

by Tamara Sniffin



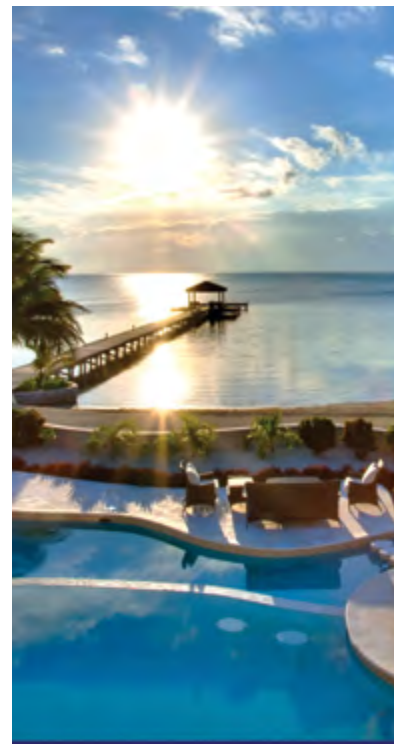
**Tambo the Tapir**

Suffering from “stuck song syndrome,” otherwise known as the pesky earworm, I’m plagued with the Tom Paxton “Going to the Zoo” song as we walk into the entrance way of the Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center. In my brain the song skips on replay for the next two and a half hours with intermittent content diversions...*we’re going to the zoo, zoo, zoo...* OH LOOK a tapir taking a bath...*how about you, you, you...* WOW check out Junior the jaguar napping, I wanna rub his belly... *you can come too, too, too...* OMG what’s that smell, peccary?... *we’re going to the zoo, zoo, zoo...* AHHA baby monkeys!!!

No matter what our age, going to the zoo resurrects a childlike excitement that never grows old. Sure, as an adult I would prefer to see the exotic animals of Belize in the wild, but we all know how likely those chances are! Somehow I don’t see myself spending days hiking deep within the jungle just to catch a glimpse of the elusive jaguar, or following a tapir path for miles in hopes of spotting our national animal. Admiring these beautiful creatures within a natural habitat at the zoo is the closest I will ever get, and with some of them I’m happy to have a fence between us! *My, what big teeth you have Junior!*

What I love about the Belize Zoo is that it’s more of an animal refuge and education center than showcasing animals in cages. Spread over 29 acres, spacious, wild dwellings are suited to the specific needs of each animal. The zoo was started in 1983 when a collection of wild animals used in making documentary films were in desperate need of a home. The zoo now houses more than 150 animals representing 45 native species, and all of them either orphaned, rescued, rehabilitated, born at the zoo or donated from other zoological

**Continued on Page 4**



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**BELIZEAN COVE ESTATES**



# Going Wild at the Belize Zoo

Continued from Page 3

institutions. No wild catches here! These animal ambassadors represent their species in fine fashion, and are essential in educating the public and instilling an appreciation for Belizean wildlife.

One of my favorite zoo residents is the black jaguar, Lucky Boy. In July 2012 I closely followed his heart-breaking story, when he had been

left for dead in a cage after those responsible for his care abandoned him. In an impressive effort by members from the Belize Wildlife Conservation Network, Lucky Boy was rescued. Near death, the emaciated jaguar was found starving and riddled with parasites. Nothing but skin and bones, his recovery was questionable at best, but un-

der intensive care, and taken in by the Belize Zoo, Lucky Boy is now a gorgeous, healthy big cat. Who doesn't love a good animal rescue story? Too bad he was camera shy and wouldn't pose for us!

Being a self-proclaimed 'bird brain,' Panama the Harpy Eagle is a bird of prey that has also captured my heart. Harpy Eagles are the

largest and most powerful raptors in the Americas and are considered nearly extinct in Central America. Hatched in 2002 in Panama, under the Harpy Eagle Restoration Program, 'Panama' suffered damage to his left eye when 'exiting the egg' and was deemed un-releasable into the wild. Panama is quite

Continued on Page 6

## Panama the Harpy Eagle



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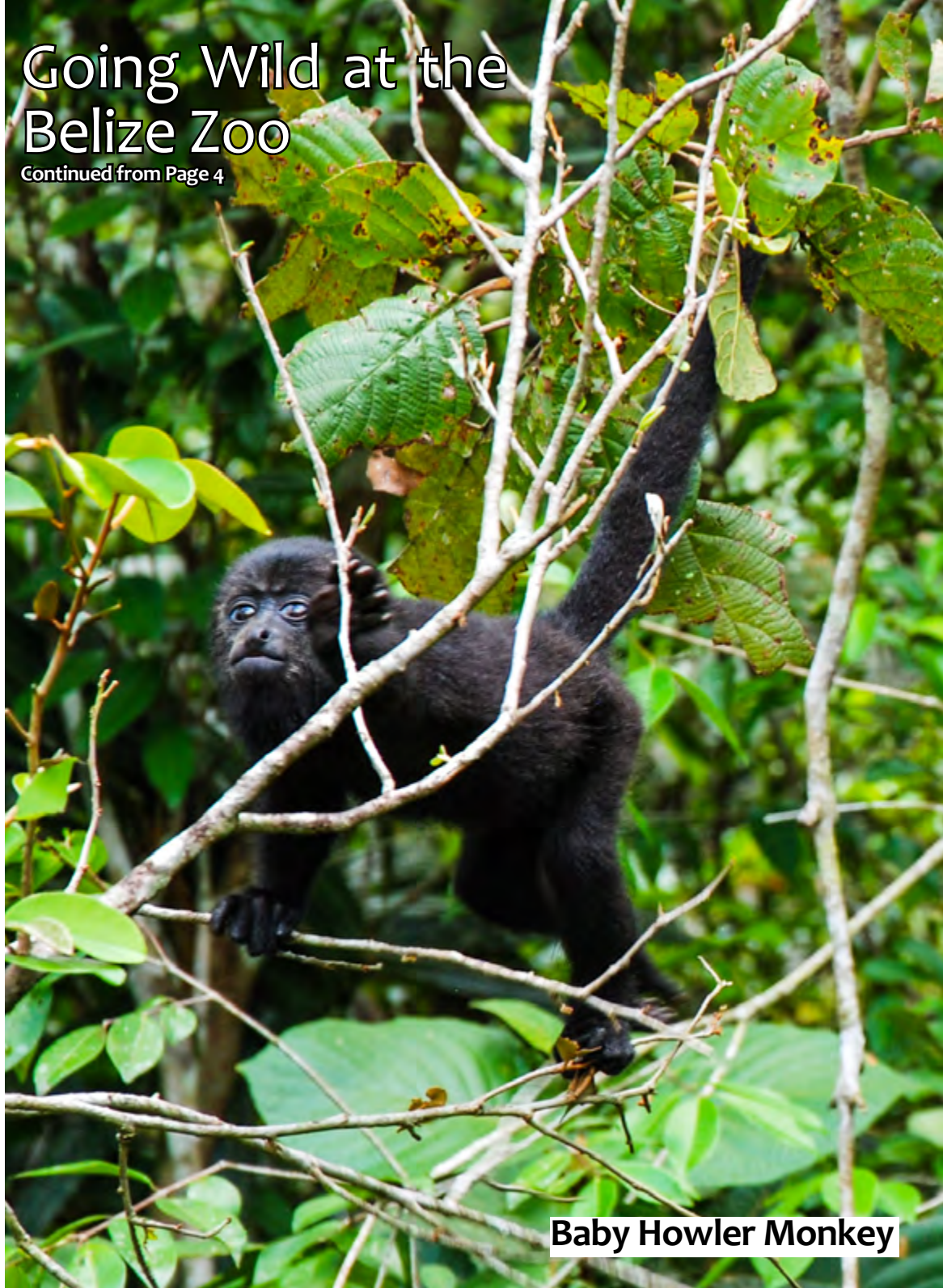
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BELIZEAN SHORES RESORT

# Going Wild at the Belize Zoo

Continued from Page 4



**Baby Howler Monkey**

the celebrity at the zoo, and he along with other zoo residents even have birthday parties in their honor! How about that!

It's hard to imagine a person leaving the zoo without realizing how fortunate we are that these magnificent creatures call Belize home. We can

only hope that a seed of responsibility to conserve and protect these animals has been planted, and that the sense of stewardship will continue to grow.

The Belize Zoo is located at mile 29 on the George Price/Western Highway. Admission is \$15US for adults and \$5US for children, Belizean residents are \$7BZ per adult and \$2BZ per child. Hours are 8:30AM to 5PM daily. For more information please visit their website at [www.belizezoo.org](http://www.belizezoo.org)

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# Making the Coffee Connection

By Janelle Cowo

Coffee – “a drink made from the roasted and ground beanlike seeds of a tropical shrub, served hot or iced” – that’s pretty much the standardized meaning of the most consumed beverage in the world. But for us coffee lovers, coffee is the fuel of humankind and the bustling society we live in. Coffee can be the eye opener or even the burning-the-midnight-oil drink. It can also be the beverage of choice at lunch time!

From the classic espresso to the flavoured frappes, we just can’t seem to get enough coffee into our systems. Ambergris Caye has its fair share of caffeine enthusiasts, and luckily there are several establishments to satisfy our needs. Whether you find yourself north, south or anywhere in between, you are sure to find a place to sit down and have a cup of fresh brew on the island.



## South – Rum+Bean

For many coffee is more than just a drink – drinking coffee means hanging out with friends, family or your significant other. And that’s exactly what Rum+Bean elaborated on! Even though Rum+Bean is undoubtedly one of my favourite places to get good coffee, I often find myself going there to escape the hustle and bustle of downtown San Pedro. Located south of town inside the Mahogany Bay development, Rum+Bean is a quaint coffee shop with charm and great brews.

Whether you take a seat inside their air conditioned sitting room or outdoors on their

shady patio area, you are sure to feel relaxed while enjoying your favourite cup of coffee. Exchange fun banter with their friendly

baristas, who serve up exotic coffee drinks and innovative craft cocktails “with a soul”.

**Continued on Page 8**




## Belizean Arts Gallery

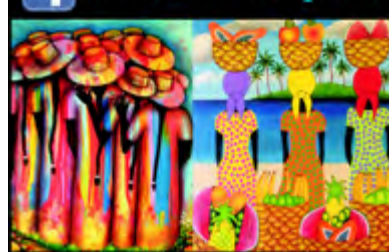
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## Paintings Jewelry Crafts

 [belizeanarts.sanpedro](https://www.facebook.com/belizeanarts.sanpedro)





# Coffee Connections Continued from Page 7



## North – Marbuck's Coffee House

Coffee also has a fun upbeat side, and that's exactly the ambiance at Marbuck's Coffee House in Tres Cocos Area, just north of the Sir Barry Bowen Bridge. With its open-air concept, Marbuck's lets you enjoy coffee in a true paradise setting. Yup, I'm talking sipping coffee under swaying coconut trees while a cool Caribbean breeze blows. It is a great place to hang out with friends and have a laugh or two!

Even though they specialize in coffee drinks, Marbuck's is more than just a cup of joe! Mar's delicious home-baked goodies are a delicious treat, and no way can we miss out on their famous Wine Down every Thursday evening with live music! Good coffee, good eats and great company – sounds like a winner to me!

## Anywhere – Caye Coffee Roasting Company



There isn't always time to go to a coffee bar, and that's why we recommend to stock up on Caye Coffee. Here on Ambergris Caye, we think of it all! For those who prefer to brew their own cup of joe at home, Caye Coffee Roasting Company provides premium coffee blends fresh for your coffee pot.

Owners Paul DuVille and his wife Marci Price take pride in their product, importing only high quality beans which are roasted and ground right here in San Pedro Town to assure the freshest product. Originally from Toronto, Canada, Paul and Marci moved here with the mission of making the best coffee possible while enjoying the perks of living in paradise. Paul and Marci believe they have truly found their home in San Pedro!

As coffee lovers, Paul and Marci wanted to give islanders and visitors a choice in their brew by creating three roast blends - Front

Street (light), Middle Street (medium) and Back Street (dark) – for the varying strengths of coffee. Back Street is definitely the one to grab if every morning feels like a Monday to you; its bold taste can certainly wipe away the last vestiges of sleep and prep you for your day. Front Street is for the newly initiated into the coffee drinking world – a lighter blend that is perfect to compliment an island breakfast of Maya eggs and fry jacks. And for the 'Goldilocks' sipper amongst us, Middle Street is often considered just right. A combination of Front and Back Street, it is strong, but still light enough to enjoy throughout the day. You can purchase their coffee at their location in San Pablo, or many local grocery stores carry Caye Coffee as well.

For Paul and Marci, there isn't a favourite blend – you just have to choose the right one for the right moment! "Our aim is to ensure a great tasting cup of coffee every time you brew our products!"

*Just talking about this delicious brew has me craving a cup!*







## 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](http://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](mailto: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.

**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.



## SHOP

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

## 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!

## STAY



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

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

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

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

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

**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.





## 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.

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**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](http://BelizeSir.com)



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



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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.

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"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

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**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](mailto: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](http://facebook.com/CasaPicassoBelize) & [casapicassobelize.com](http://casapicassobelize.com).



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# The Patron Saint of Fishermen: *San Pedro*

By Janelle Cowo



Today, San Pedro Town is the bustling tourism capital of Belize. Not so long ago, the island was known as a small fishing village rooted in tradition and the Roman Catholic faith. We have come a long way from a quiet community with under a 100 residents, but not even development can eliminate traditions passed on from one generation to the next. One such tradition is paying homage to the Patron Saint of Fishermen, Saint Peter, who islanders believe has guided San Pedro Town throughout its transition.

Saint Peter is the island's patron saint and namesake, and as such, he is honoured each year. The celebrations embrace the island's beginnings as a small fishing village and promotes unity as well as history, culture and tradition. Growing up, islanders have been taught the importance of Saint Peter, who has watched over generations of fishermen while out at sea, keeping them safe from harm.

For those not acquainted with the Catholic religion, Saint Peter was one of Jesus' 12 Apostles and the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Originally a fisherman, Saint Peter devoted his life to spreading the word of God and died a martyr.

But as the island has evolved into modern times, the celebration of Saint Peter has also evolved and now combines three elements: the religious, the cultural and the festive celebra-

**Continued on Page 14**



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## Celebrating San Pedro

Continued from Page 13



tion. With the main day being June 29th, several activities are organized around this date. The celebration of San Pedro is one of the most anticipated celebrations on the island, not only for residents but for visitors alike.

The religious and cultural celebration are intertwined. "La Bajada" is the traditional and religious celebration that begins with ten days of novenas leading up to Dia de San Pedro. During La Bajada, the Saint's statue is brought down from its permanent altar inside the Catholic Church. On

the tenth night, San Pedro is returned to the church on June 28<sup>th</sup>, the eve of El Dia de San Pedro.

On the 28th, after an hour's mass inside the church, residents gather outside at the outdoor statue of Saint Peter for La Alborada (all night activities until dawn) to celebrate with a variety of traditional Mestizo dances and music. On the 29th, the annual dawn fishermen mass kicks off the day's activities at 4AM. Attended mostly by males, the well-attended mass gives the fishermen the opportunity to

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# Celebrating San Pedro

Continued from Page 14



be thankful and ask Saint Peter for protection while at sea. The mass of thanksgiving is followed by the annual traditional fishermen breakfast. A procession and blessing of island boats ends the beautiful religious celebrations.

As for festive celebrations, San Pedro Town Council is sure to throw a grand festival with dancing, live entertainment and even fireworks.

If you are lucky enough to be on the island during the celebration in honour of Saint Peter, you are invited to join in the ceremony and fanfare. Not only will you learn a bit more about La Isla Bonita, but you will be a part of an authentic cultural experience.

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# San Pedro's Lobster Festival is a culinary celebration

By Mary Gonzalez



There are three official celebrations held in honor of the crustacean delicacy known as the Caribbean Spiny Lobster. Every year on June 15th, after a 4-month honeymoon phase, lobsters can once again be harvested for consumption. Our sister island Caye Caulker originally began celebrating the lobster with a weekend-long festival that has become an annual event warranting a pilgrimage to the sleepy island. The festival boasts a pageant, all-day grilling and feasting, and of course, parties along the beach! Placencia Peninsula joined in on

the festivities as well, celebrating in its own uniquely cultural way. Then San Pedro Town joined in, adding its own unique spin to the revelry.

From nightly pub crawls to restaurants' lobster specials to specially-priced daily tour activities and more, there is something for everyone. Taking advantage of the incredible array of services, talented chefs and bartenders on our island, the organizers came up with a weeklong party that culminates in a rocking block party in Central Park. The party is the culmination of the week-long event, and sees

booths serving up all manner of culinary delights specializing in the star of the evening: the lobster!

Since the annual San Pedro Lobster Festival began ten years ago, our parent company *The San Pedro Sun* has had the fun opportunity to be one of the judges for the dishes on offer. That invitation to taste all those culinary creations sounds like a lobster lover's dream come true, doesn't it?! I can't lie; it kind of is...and that's why our staff arm wrestles for the one judge's spot offered to us each year.

I've had the chance to judge

quite a few times, and each time, I'm blown away by the creativity of the chefs/cooks. You know that scene in *Forrest Gump*, when Bubba kept harping about the various ways to eat shrimp? Well, I've had grilled lobster, lobster kebabs, lobster pad Thai, lobster Pierogi, lobster curry salad in a waffle cone, lobster cannoli, lobster bloody Mary, lobster cheesecake, lobster dip, lobster ceviche, lobster sushi, lobster sliders, lobster ice cream, lobster, lobster...and they've all been damn delicious! Of course,

**Continued on Page 17**



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we end up with our favorites, tally up the points assigned, and prizes are awarded.

How can YOU enjoy the delicious lobster dishes this coming Lobster Festival? Well, come on over to the big block party at Central Park on Saturday, June 25th. Colorful booths start serving refreshing drinks early in the evening, while cooks fire up their grills. You can hear the sizzle of the grills as the lobsters get a smoky treatment. Some bartenders even go so far as to use the antennae of the lobster to make straws for some, interesting cocktails. While you sip, look around and make your mind up. Do you want to start with the DELICIOUS basics? Dip or

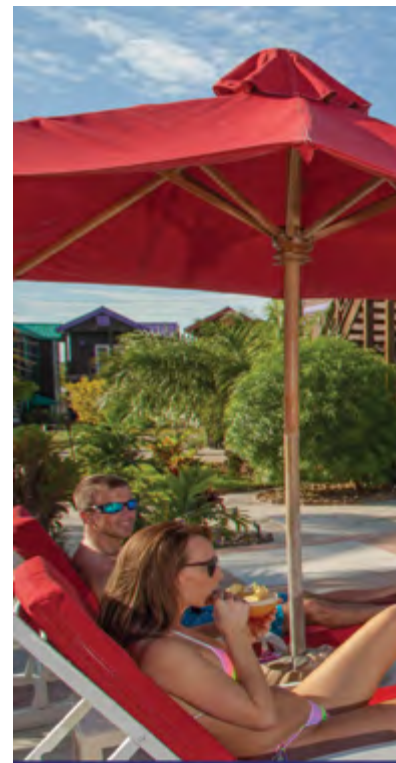
ceviche... can't go wrong. Need something a bit heartier? Perhaps a basic grilled lobster tail with the Belizean fixin's of rice and beans and coleslaw/salad? The height of deliciousness!

Then there are the special surprise treats! One year, I got to sample a truly delicious lobster cannoli – creamy, naturally-sweet lobster stuffed inside a crispy sweet shell for an excellent mix of sweet and savory. Then there was a buttery, gooey lobster Pierogi that fulfilled dreams I had no idea I had. I mean, you can't go wrong with luscious pasta stuffed with perfectly seasoned lobster meat, tossed around in herbed butter. Mmmm... Oh, now I'm remembering the curried lobster served

in a waffle cone. It was like a savory ice cream... cold creamy lobster goodness. The same chef also prepared a delightful lobster cheesecake a couple years later... some chefs truly take the competition seriously. And we all benefit with their delicious experiments!

Here's hoping you're ready for the gastronomical delights of the 2016 San Pedro Lobster Festival!

Don't forget that Placencia is having its own version of the festival on June 19-21 down at the peninsula. Caye Caulker, the original festival locale, is celebrating theirs in grand fashion on July 1 – 3rd. Join us, as we party like LobSTARS!



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# A bird's eye view of the Blue Hole

By Mary Gonzalez



I don't think I'll ever lose that frisson of excitement when I board a plane, heading off to parts either familiar or unknown. My first visit to San Pedro, Ambergris Caye came in 1987, when my father splurged on a flight for me to arrive in style. That stomach-churning feeling at the first elevation, followed by the eerie whooshing in my ears soon disappeared, as I opened my eyes and stared in wonder at the vistas below. The kind pilot let me sit next to him, so I had the best vantage point. I got to see the specks of mangroves and tiny islets dotting the blues and greens of the water. Clouds floated by and for a 6-year old, nothing was as special

as that magical ride to my new home.

The magic remains, and in fact it was rejuvenated when I received a wonderful surprise courtesy of my editor and Tropic Air. After 11 years working at the paper, I was gifted a flyover of the BLUE HOLE!

Finally, I'd see the World Heritage Site the way I've only witnessed via photographs and video.

Tropic Air has begun offering this new aerial tour to observe the giant sub marine sinkhole "the way it was meant to be seen...from the air".

The entire tour was an experience in itself. I could see the break where our barrier reef ensures our island's protection, and I could only marvel at the various shades of blue that stretched as far as the eye could see. The one-hour ride took us over the deep blue of the Caribbean Sea, turning to the Lighthouse Atoll...which meant the Blue Hole was getting closer. But even before the star of the morning could be revealed, I along with other guests in the plane oohed and awed over the change in scenery. That stunning turquoise and clear waters of the atoll that make snorkelers' hearts sing...the unmistakable drop off where divers can delight nearby, and unspoiled islands.



Lone Fisherman on Kayak!



My aunt and I on one of our many flights with Tropic Air.

My heart nearly stopped at the sight of a lone kayaker just paddling away. As we kept flying, we could see one of the iconic fishermen's sailboats (which you can see tied up at the swing bridge in Belize City). There were several kayaks tied to the back. I imagined what it could possibly be like to spend a week or two at a time on a sailboat, simply floating around one of the most iconic locations of our beautiful Belize. A few shadows darted here and there, perhaps some dolphins, rays, sharks...

Our flight kept its track, and on the monitor, I could see the label "BHOLE" and knew we were nearby.

Continued on Page 19

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# The Belize Blue Hole

Continued from Page 18



Bit by bit, she drew near. I still find it hard to describe what it felt like – but I felt like I was 6 again.

I took so many pictures (over 500) but nothing compares to what I saw with my own eyes. This stunning sinkhole that has been explored by Jacques Cousteau himself, yet still contains so much mystery, a life source for so much marine life. A large source of income for the tourism industry, and as such, us Belizeans – she lay below, shimmering in the sunlight.

There is no greater feeling...as we flew away to catch the sight of the shipwreck along the reef, I couldn't help but wonder. How did I get so lucky?

## About Tropic Air's Blue Hole Aerial Tour:

\$214USD per person, minimum 2 guests, maximum 12.

Departs San Pedro/Caye Caulker every Tuesday at 11AM, returns 12PM

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Sudoku Answers  
Puzzle on Page 2

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



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