



My *Beautiful* Belize

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

| SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2016 | VOL. 04 #08 | FREE |

Rejoice in Belize's Independence!

ALSO INSIDE:

- * Historic St. George's Caye
- * Ernestine Carballo, Belize's Soca Queen
- * "I Love Belize Bad" by Samuel Sabido
- * Ancient Maya secrets of Belize
- * Our National Bird: Keel-Billed Toucan
- * Prepping for a Spooktacular October
- * Searching for the Garinagu capital of Belize



From the Editor *Tamara Sniffin*



**CRYSTAL
AUTO RENTAL**

Road tripping...have wheels will travel

I'm guilty of taking the easy way out when it comes to road trips. Although there is a lot to be said for public transportation when it comes to cost and culture, there's something liberating about sitting behind the wheel of a car when setting off on an adventure.

When on Ambergris Caye, my means of transportation include a golf cart, bicycle and on foot, all very pleasant ways to get from point A to B, but when headed to the mainland I'm just itching to put the pedal to the metal and hit the road! As the pilot of your own destiny, you have the luxury of spontaneous travel. You can stop where/whenver you want for that great photo op, a quick bite along the way, or yes, brake at roadside plant stands! Why not venture off-road into unfamiliar territory for a little look-around? Your possibilities are endless when you have your own wheels.

My go-to rental company is Crystal Auto Rentals. Owner Mr. Jay, along with Rina and staff are the nicest, most accommodating folks around, and their vehicles are well maintained, newer models with low mileage. You can choose from a variety of sedans, trucks, vans, SUV's or even a mobile home if you want! I love that they'll pick you up (and drop you) from wherever you are arriving/departing, via water taxi, Municipal or International Airport, and what's a road trip must...a cooler of course. Crystal Auto not only provides you with an ice chest, they even have cell phones available if you need one!

So buckle in, tune in the radio, keep your eyes on the road, your hand on the wheel and discover the roads of My Beautiful Belize.

SuDoku Time! *Answers on Page 15*

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Wolfe's Woofers

By: Dennis Wolfe

Lost Husband



"Why do you have a Belize driver's license, señor?" the Mexican policeman asked me.

"My home is in San Pedro, Belize," I told him, "but I spend so much time seeing my doctor in Chetumal that I bought a car here. I didn't think I needed a license."

Half an hour later Sherry said, "I guess we should consider it lucky that we didn't get a ticket."

We were at the main Chetumal police station filling out the papers for our driver's licenses. Two middle aged ladies came in and sat on the bench next to us.

"No, Yasmin," one said. "I do not want to bother the police with this."

"But you must, Beatriz," her friend said. "They might think you disappeared him."

Beatriz reluctantly went to the front desk and said, "I want to report that my husband is missing."

"How long has he been gone?" the sergeant asked.

"Let me think," she answered. "Probably about a week." He handed her a paper and said, "Fill this out and I will help you."

When she handed him the paper he looked it over.

"This says your husband is about six feet tall," he said.

"Sí, señor."

"According to this he is thirty years old, he has blue eyes and is slender of build."

"Sí. That is my Pedro."

Her friend leaped to her feet and said, "Beatriz! How can you tell this man such lies?"

"What do you mean señora?" the sergeant asked her.

"My friend's husband, Pedro, he does not look like that at all! He is short and fat with brown eyes and is forty seven years old. Is this not true Beatriz?"

"Sí," Beatriz said. "But why would I want to look for one like that?"

Web di go ahn eena September & October?!

September 3rd: * Coconut Fest at Battlefield Park in Belize City from 10AM to 6PM

* Miss San Pedro Pageant at Honourable Louis Sylvester Sporting Arena in San Pedro Town at 7PM

* Carnival King and Queen Contest at Roger's Stadium in Belize City at 7PM

September 8th: Youth Orchestra Belize Concert at the Bliss Center in Belize City at 7PM

September 9th: * Pan Yaad Concert 2016 at the House of Culture in Belize City at 7PM
* Tribute to the Baymen at Honourable Louis Sylvester Sporting Arena in San Pedro Town at 9PM



September 10th: * Battle of St. Georges Caye Rally and Crowning of Miss San Pedro at Honourable Louis Sylvester Sporting Arena in San Pedro Town at 10AM

* Queen of Bacchanal at the Honourable Louis Sylvester Sportign Arena at 9PM

* Miss Belize 2016 Pageant at the Bliss Center in Belize City at 7PM

September 16th: * 15th Annual Sound Fest at Bird's Isle in Belize City at 7PM

* Soca or Surrenda Festival at the Marion Jones Sporting Complex in Belize City at 6PM

September 17th: * Noche Centro Americana at Central Park in San Pedro Town from 7PM

* Carnival Jouvret at the front of San Cas Plaza in Belize City at 5AM

* 2016 Carnival Road March from Yarrowbrough to BTL Park in Belize City at 1PM

September 20th: * Official Flag Raising Ceremonies for Independence Eve in each municipality across Belize starting at 9PM (more details at www.mybeautifulbelize.com/independence-celebrations)

* Independence Eve Celebrations at Honourable Louis Sylvester Sporting Arena in San Pedro Town from 9PM



September 21st: * Independence Day Parade from Boca del Rio Park to Central Park in San Pedro Town starting at 1PM

* Independence Day Carnival at Central Park in Orange Walk Town starting at 2PM

September 24th: Mr. Belize Championship at the Bliss Center in Belize City at 7PM

September 25th: 18th Annual Lionman Triathlon at Sandlighter's Promenade in Belize City at 7AM

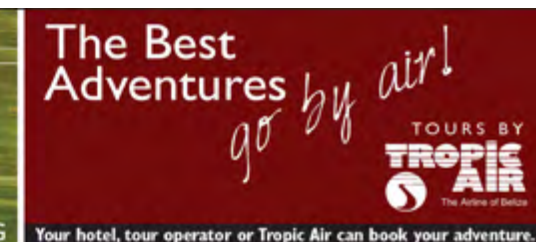
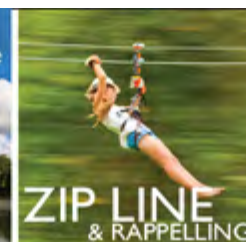
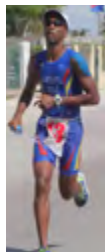
October 10th:

Dia del Pueblo at San Jose Nuevo Palmar Community Park in Orange Walk District from 10AM

October 29th: Holiday Hotel's Halloween Bash at Caprice Bar and Grill in San Pedro Town from 8PM (tentative)

October 30th: Saga Spooktacular Halloween Bash at Carlo and Ernie's Runway Bar in San Pedro Town from 1PM (tentative)

November 1st: Finados/Dia de Los Muertos at San Pedro Roman Catholic Church in San Pedro Town, all day.



An island of history and relaxation:

St. George's Caye



By Janelle Cowo

St. George's Caye is a classic destination for Belize – one that is known in almost all households for its historic significance. Yes, I'm talking about the 1798 Battle of St. George's Caye, which solidified our alliance to Britain rather than Spain, after the Baymen successfully drove off Spanish invaders during a short military engagement that lasted from September 3rd to the 20th.

But there is more to this tiny island than just its historical importance. St. George's Caye is also a great get away spot.

Back in colonial days, St. George's Caye was a favourite weekend and summer destination for British and upper class Belizeans. In fact, many well-known Belizean families still own homes there. Due to its close proximity to Belize City, it was rather easy to get to the island, adding to its popularity. Today, the island attracts visitors from all walks of life. From locals to retirees and even honeymooners, everyone enjoys the solitude and relaxed atmosphere.

As a child, I remember visiting St. George's Caye with my family almost every summer. The cooling breeze and pristine waters surrounding the island made for great adventures. Several guest



houses are available for rent and there is even a boutique lodge – St. George's Caye Resort.

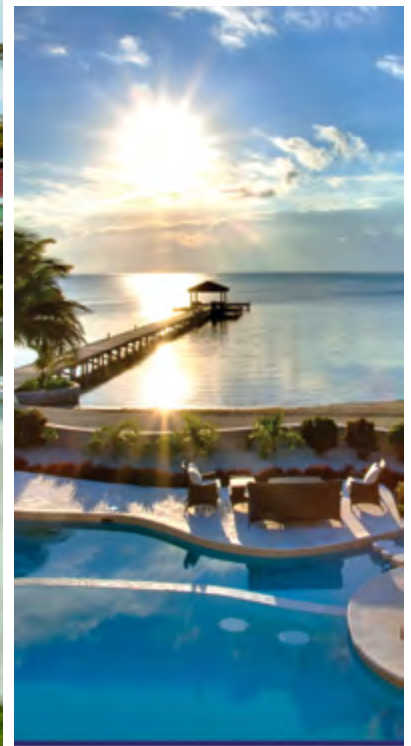
There is no electricity – most residents and the lodge obtain power either from generators or windmills – but that didn't matter. Most of the days at St. George's Caye were spent exploring the island or swimming around the bay, while at night, star gazing and storytelling were always the best forms of entertainment. Of course, for the adults there is a bar at the St. George's Caye Resort

where one can enjoy a cocktail or two.

St. George's Caye is a hot spot for water sports such as sailing, kayaking and snorkelling. For those who wish to do activities on land, visiting the St. George's Caye Aquarium, run by a 15-year-old island resident, is a blast! Visitors can also tour the St George's Caye Historic Cemetery - officially declared an Archaeology Reserve by the Institute of Archaeology in 2010. At the cemetery you can find graves from as far back as the 1700s, with many of Belize's founding fathers and families laid to rest there.

About St. George's Caye: Previously known as Cayo Cosina, the island is home to a permanent population of about 20 people. Only seven miles

of the coast of Belize City, St. George's Caye was once the first capital of British Honduras (Belize) and is the site of the Battle of St. George's Caye that took place on the 10th of September, 1798. It was settled as a town in 1650, and was the largest settlement in what was then British Honduras in the 17th century and 18th century; however, its importance was eventually eclipsed by the growth of Belize City.



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BELIZEAN COVE ESTATES

Rejoicing in Belize's Independence!

By Janelle Cowo



To me, Belize's independence means the freedom for my country to be unlike any other.

Without a doubt, Independence Day is the biggest celebration of the year in Belize, and with September 21st quickly approaching, Belizeans at home and abroad are overrun with feeling of patriotism. From the pomp and circumstance, to the 21-gun salute, and the massive carnival parades, there are so many ways to rejoice.

This year's celebrations are being held under the theme "*Sovereign and Strong – Together as one*", as we observe 35 years of independence. We are a relatively young country that still faces many challenges, but Belizeans never give up, and "together as

one" we are striving for a great Belize!

After all, She has given us so many reason to celebrate her splendour:

Our people:

I doubt you will ever find a country as diverse as Belize. Our population comprises of people of many cultures all living harmoniously "as one". We may face challenges on a daily basis, but we always have a friendly smile and warmly welcome everyone to enjoy Belize.

Continued on Page 5

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Rejoice in Belize

Continued from Page 4



Our land:

Ok, this may be a vague reason, but it's hard to specify what part of our land we love the most. Belize is 22,966 km of everything: from forests to savannahs, caves to mountains, reefs to waterfalls. Yup, we are truly blessed with the best land (and waters) in the region!

Continued on Page 6



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Rejoice in Belize

Continued from Page 5



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Our history:

Belize's past has shaped it to be the country it is today. Our history is as diverse as our population. Once a land populated by the incredible Maya, Belize also has British roots. In fact, we are the only English speaking country in Central America. The fierce pride we have for our heritage and history is reason enough to celebrate.

We rejoice in our Independence for reasons too many to list. It is a time when we come together to celebrate what makes us who we are, what defines us as a people, culture and nation. With national pride and love for our country we shall celebrate Belize's identity during a month of color, music and much revelry. Join us!

About Belize's Independence:

A British Crown Colony since 1862, the official name of the territory was changed from British Honduras to Belize in June



1973, but full independence was not granted until September 21, 1981. The struggle for Independence was led by Premier at the time, Right Honourable George Price (+) - leader of the People's United Party. The independence campaign consisted of six years of intensive diplomatic activity on the part of the Belize Government in an exercise that became known as "the internationalization effort", spearheaded by two young Belize attorneys Said Musa and Assad Shoman.

Ernestine Carballo: Belize's Queen of Soca

By Mary Gonzalez



Her stage presence is such that you can't help but get up and dance. Ernestine Carballo will walk on stage, and traverse every inch of it, all while singing and dancing - in heels no less! The songstress has unmatched energy both on and off stage, and her smart lyrics capture an enthusiastic audience. In costume or plainclothes, her dynamic performances strike a chord, and it is easy to see why she's considered Belize's Queen of Soca.

Soca music is a quintessentially Caribbean sound also known as the soul of Calypso. Originating from Trinidad and Tobago, within a subculture that found itself marginalized, this musical genre has undergone a variety of refinements to incorporate funk, soul and calypso, peppered with cadence. In Belize, soca music is year-round, but never more so prolific than during our September Celebrations! The undisputed royalty of this unique, festive sound in Belize is definitely Ernestine Carballo. Beautiful and talented, Ernestine is the life of the party, and ain't no party like a soca party!

WHO is Ernestine Carballo?

Singer, songwriter, professional entertainer, Ernestine is an award-winning artist born and raised in Belize City, Belize. She is the only girl in a family of eight boys, and has an additional six brothers from her father's side. From studying Integrated Science and Arts at Wesley College, to a stint at the Institute of Creative Arts, Ernestine eventually transitioned to music, and we are all the better for it.

Her name is synonymous with celebratory music, and is perhaps best known for the dynamic September songs "Carnival Is Here" and "Till the Sun Come Up". The music and lyrics make us Belizeans feel truly patriotic, and it is our duty to shake it till the sun comes up indeed!

A versatile performer, Ernestine showcases her multiple talents by incorporating Pop, R&B and even Dancehall to her songs. At Caye Caulker Lobsterfest, she performed a fabulous woman power dancehall tune that had the crowd roaring for more!

She has the crowd going wherever she performs; her tours have taken her to places such as Los Angeles, New York and Chicago in the United States of America. In the Caribbean, she shone in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Europe – more specifically, Spain, France and London, have also been receptive to her music, with London being her favorite place to have performed so far.

Ernestine is grateful for the support she has received thus far. Her family support and the fans from around the world keep her going, and make her want to make more music. We look forward to the new tunes, and as always, we are ready to 'mash up di place' with Ernestine Carballo, Belize's Queen of Soca!





THE DIVE BAR
BELIZE

Elegant meals created by our Professional Chefs
to go great with our island cocktails,
Mon-Sun: 7:00 am - 12:00 am

226-3365, 1/2 MILE NORTH OF THE BRIDGE

Full-service Scuba Diving Facility
Mon-Sun: 7:00 am - 5:00 pm
Doug@seastarbelize.com



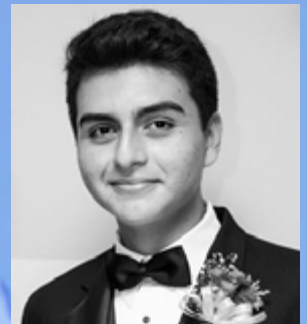
Get Wet, Get Salty!



"I love Belize Bad"

To all Belizeans, dah home or dah Farren,
I love Belize Bad
I love Belize like Johnny love Orange Walk
I love Belize like Darrel love BTL park
I love Belize like Agric love Pan
I love Belize like city people love Jam Roll Man
I love Belize like Belizean love Quarrel
I love Belize like Belizean love One Barrel
I love Belize like Swing bridge love swing
I love Belize like Jo grind love married thing
I love Belize like old folks like cuss
I love Belize like people love Serano's bus
I love Belize like Belize love Lee Chee
I love Belize like they now name Key Lee
I love Belize like Maya Island Air love the sky
I love Belize like Belize love Pou's Meatpie
I love Belize like Ocean Ferry love the sea
I love Belize like Manatee Lookout love Manatee
I love Belize like Belizeans loved Polar Pak
I love Belize like real people love The Real Barber Shop
I love Belize like we love ah swim
I love Belize like Belize LOVE Belikin
I love Belize like Love FM love oldies
I love Belize like I love morning time eena downtown Brodie's
I love Belize like Amandala love know
I love Belize like super star loved Cayooooooooo
I love Belize like the world love the Blue Hole
I love Belize like we love Paul Nabor
I love Belize like people love Cisco's
I love Belize like parents seh they used to "go dah disco"
I love Belize like people seh Government love thief
I love Belize like we supposed to love the reef.
I love Belize like Belizean love Ice cream Shoppe
I love Belize like Sedi love Pickstock
I love Belize like Belizean love Sikaffy Store
I love Belize like Musa love Fort George
I love Belize like we love Mango Season
I love Belize like party neva need a reason
I love Belize like flood love come without warning
I love Belize like Mista Peters love sing "Good Morning"
I love Belize like Freetown gyal love got wata
I love Belize like everybody bloody love Caulker
I love Belize like Belizeans love ah plate a Seré
I love Belize like Lord Rhaburn love sing "If yuh baan deh, yuh baan deh"
I love Belize like man fronta Brad's like bet
I love Belize like Catherine's gyal love Sister Margaret
I love Belize like people dah Lord's Ridge love rest
I love Belize like people love talk bout Jackie Vasquez
I love Belize like Belizeans love Valencia and Tutsi Ideal
I love Belizean like Belize love Ms. Marleni Cuellar and Mr. William Neal

I love Belize like we love everyday in Septemba
I love Belize like we love tambran, seaweed, the nice things you
have to rememba
I love Belize like Belizeans love Andy
I love Belize like old man love Tropical Brandy
I love Belize like Belizeans love Rum
I love Belize like Tata Duende love Thumb
I love Belize like La Ruta Maya love Row
I love Belize like Belize love Dario's
I love Belize so much ah senseless
And best Believe I wah love it relentless
Ah love Belize bad like Belize LOVE Marie Sharp
Ah love Belize like Belizeans love the sight ah fruit or paletas cart
Ah love Belize senseless and if yuh cya understand
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Noh even bother count how much times yuh seh it, once you say
you love Belize you sure won't forget it



by Samuel Sabido

Belize

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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. Outdoor rooftop casual dining, world cuisine. 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 1/2 mile North of the bridge. 226-3365/625-3364



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



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

STAY

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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REAL ESTATE

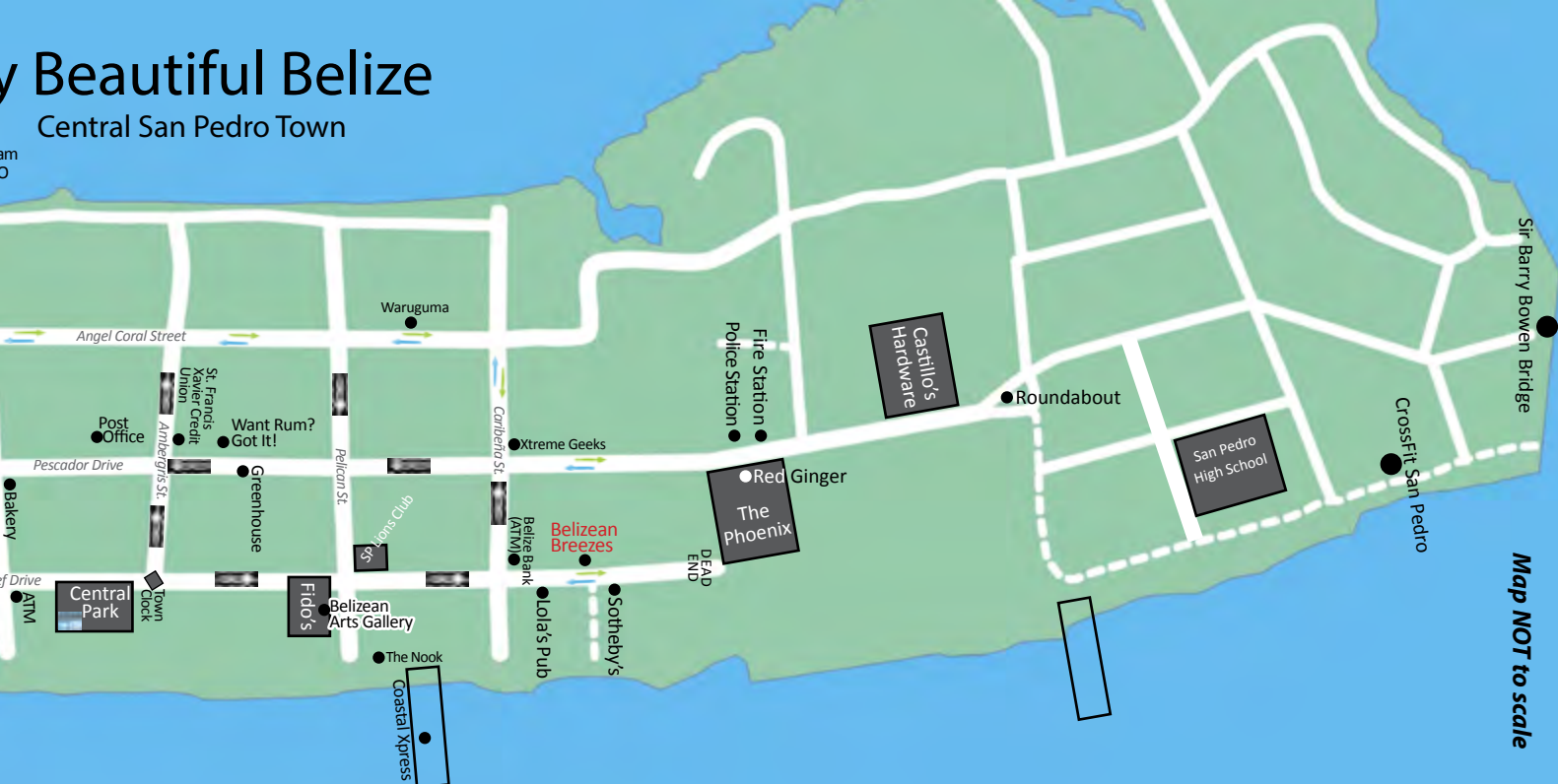
BELIZE SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY is a full-service firm offering sales, vacation rentals, and property management in Belize (Ambergris Caye & Placencia Peninsula). We are service oriented and will ensure that our clients' needs are met and exceeded. BelizeSir.com



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

My Beautiful Belize

Central San Pedro Town



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September-October 2016

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An undiscovered Belize: *Unveiling ancient Maya secrets*

By Janelle Cowo



Throughout the years, more and more discoveries are being made by archaeologists studying the ancient Maya civilization in Belize. Even though Belize has hundreds of archaeological sites throughout the country, only a few have been explored, with excavation still ongoing at many.

One such site is Nim Li Punit, located in the Toledo District. Also known as "The Big Hat", this archaeological reserve sits on 121.32 acres



of land and is considered one of the smallest sites in the country.

I have been to Nim Li Punit three times, and on my most recent visit I learned that less than 50% of the entire reserve has been excavated! The site has already produced significant discoveries and some findings haven't been fully analyzed - I can only imagine what lies hidden beneath the remaining layers of soil!

Continued on Page 14



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An undiscovered Belize Continued from Page 13



Nim Li Punit is regarded as a ceremonial center consisting of two plazas, one higher than the other. The largest structure is 33-40 feet above the plaza level and is constructed of dry sandstone. You won't find defined temples at Nim Li Punit, mostly there are mounds, and many are not allowed to be climbed on for safety reasons.

However, it's not the structures that make Nim Li Punit so intriguing. Rather, it is the discoveries made there. Archaeologist have found 25 stelae, of which eight are carved. Those carved stelae tell the story of the site and many secrets of the Maya civilization. The most recent discovery was in May 2015 when a jade pendant was found. It is believed to be one of the most significant finds in Belize. The major find of 26 ceramic pots and several jade pieces also sheds new light on the Maya world, revealing the story of a powerful ruler and a ritual sacrifice.

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An undiscovered Belize

Continued from Page 14



However, Nim Li Punit is not the only site shaking the archaeology world in Belize. Just this year, archaeologists excavating at Xunantunich Archaeological Reserve in the Cayo District uncovered the largest tomb ever found in Belize. The discovery sheds new light into the history of the important ceremonial centre, which became one of the most powerful in the region.

Archaeologist Dr. Jaime Awe explained that skeletal remains of a Maya ruler were found inside the beautifully styled tomb which dates back to the Late Classic Period. More tests need to be done in order to confirm the time period, but what makes the find even more impressive are the objects found near the skeleton. Awe explained that the person was buried and adorned with pots, vases, jade beads and even with remains of what appears to be a wild animal.

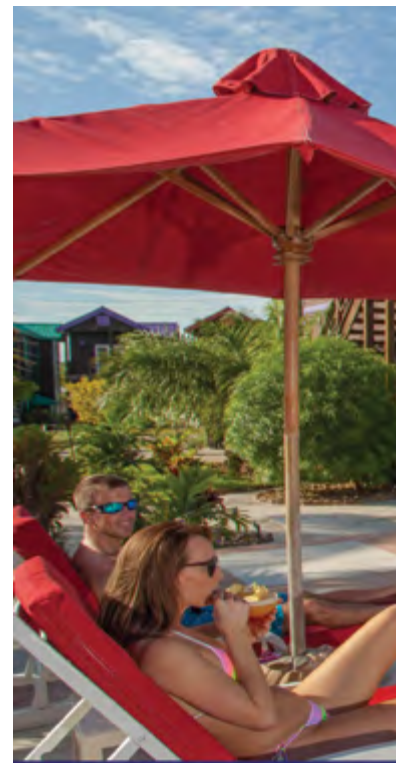
Although archaeologists are unravelling more about Xunantunich through this scribal room, the sacred burial site and the panel, there is still much to be found and researched. Who knows what other secrets are yet to be discovered regarding the ancient Maya civilization in Belize!

Visit Nim Li Punit and Xunantunich: Open 365 days in the year from 8AM to 5PM. A \$5 fee is charged for Belizean visitors, while non-Belizeans are charged \$10. All Belizeans enter the archaeological site for FREE on Sundays and Public & Bank Holidays.

September-October 2016

Sudoku Answers Puzzle on Page 2

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



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That's Mister Keel-Billed Toucan to you!

By Tamara Sniffin

Look Mom, there's the Fruit Loop bird!

Although the national bird of Belize is often compared to the goofy "Toucan Sam" caricature seen on the popular cereal box, the Keel-Billed toucan is a sophisticated bird worthy of great respect. For one thing, Mr. Keel-Billed would never be caught eating cereal for breakfast! A nice bowl of fruit, along with some insects and perhaps a lizard on the side would be more like it.

Scientifically known as *Ramphastos sulfuratus*, the Keel-Billed toucan gained notoriety when the Right Honorable George Price adopted him as the national bird on September 21st, 1981 when Belize became an independent nation. The bird wears the honor well, donning his regal bill that is colored with a mixture of green, red, yellow or orange. Made from a substance called keratin, the elongated beak is

very light, but exceptionally strong.

Perhaps the only thing the Keel-Billed toucan and "Toucan Sam" have in common is their gregarious nature. Occurring in small flocks that roam together through the tree tops in search of food, this playful, beautiful bird is extremely social and is rarely spotted alone. Often they travel in groups of six to 15 other toucans.

Its colors are startling, from its rainbow bill to its iridescent blue legs, few birds display such a variety of color. Its face, throat and chest are yellow with a narrow border of red on the chest; its body is black with red under the tail and white on the upper tail. The Keel-Billed has a patch of bare green skin around the eye, and the feet are arranged like a woodpeckers', with two toes forward and two toes back. The toucan can reach 17 to 22 inches in height and 5 to 9 pounds in weight.

Keel-Billed toucans can survive 15 to 20 years in the wild.

The Keel-Billed toucan's range extends from southern Mexico to northern Colombia and northwestern Venezuela where they inhabit tropical and subtropical rainforests. They live together in tree holes with five to six other birds, where they all sleep with their bills tucked under the body to make room for their roommates. Natural enemies of Keel-Billed toucans are birds of prey and humans. Snakes, monkeys, weasels and other birds prey on their eggs. Major threats

for the survival of Keel-Billed toucans are habitat destruction and uncontrolled hunting for meat and their beaks. Despite these factors, this toucan is still widespread and numerous in the wild.

The most recognized and celebrated bird in Belize, in some parts of Central and South America people avoid Keel-Billed toucans due to widespread belief that they are associated with demons and evil spirits. As crazy as that sounds, I guess our national bird is better associated with a breakfast cereal rather than a monster!



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A spooktacular Halloween experience on Ambergris Caye!

By Janelle Cowo



October and Halloween are like peanut butter and jelly – you can't think about one without the other. We welcome October with open arms. The red white and blue September Celebrations décor has come down, and are now replaced with ghoulish accessories – at least here on Ambergris Caye they are! This island takes Halloween seriously, celebrating the day of All Hallows Eve with some of the best parties in Belize.



Every year, the parties thrown for Halloween grow more and more extravagant, with none more than The Holiday Hotel Halloween Party. Every year, hundreds of islanders sport their best costumes in hopes of winning over the judges and ultimately scoring cash prizes, cool give aways and best of all - BRAGGING RIGHTS!

The parties are not limited to just the adults – pets and children can have fun too; Saga Humane Society hosts an annual Halloween Costume Competition for pets, while several organizations hold Trick or Treat parties for the kids in various neighborhoods around town.

Yes, it's time to start getting those costumes figured out while you await the official party dates!

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Where is the culture capital of the Garinagu in Belize?

By Mary Gonzalez

Ask any child who has been through the Belize primary school system to name the different ethnic groups of Belize, and you're likely to hear Maya, Mestizo, Mennonite, East Indians, Chinese, Creole, and the Garifuna. Throughout the eight years of primary school, students learn more and more about these ethnic groups, dressing up as them, learning

their food, their music, dances, culture, language. It's a beautiful lesson that reaffirms the cultural melting pot mentality permeating the country. I wonder then, how this question would be answered: Where is the Culture Capital of the Garinagu?

Technically, Garifuna refers to the language and culture, while the people are called Garinagu. History tells us that in 1635, two Spanish ships carrying Nigerian slaves sank and the surviving slaves found shelter in the existing Carib Indian settlements on St. Vincent. The two cultures intermixed, intermarried and eventually fused into a single culture, the Black Caribs or Garinagu. Decades later a series of wars between the French and British on St. Vincent resulted in the French and their Carib allies being forced to leave the island in 1796. The Caribs were exiled to the island of Roatan, Honduras, where they soon migrated to the mainland of Honduras. According to tradition, the first Garifuna arrived in Belize, (then British Honduras), on November 19, 1802. This day is now recognized as Garifuna Settlement Day.

With their population concentrated in the southern district of Stann Creek, the Garinagu are a colorful, vibrant part of Belize's rich tapestry of cultures. We can definitively say that of Belize's six districts, Stann Creek is the Garinagu District. But which is the capital?

Is it Dangriga?

Once called Stann Creek town, Dangriga is the district capital and a buzzing cultural hub. With a population of about 9,000, Garinagu make up the majority of that number. From the cultural/historical displays of the Garinagu at the Gulisi Garifuna Museum, to the Pen Cayetano Gallery, featuring the artwork of musician and painter of Pen Cayetano, there is much to observe. Dangriga also has the Drums of my Father Monument, the National Garifuna Council headquarters, the Thomas Vincent Ramos Monument, and is home to artists and craftsmen that welcome visits at their studios.

On November 19th, Garifuna Settlement Day, Belizeans celebrate the arrival of the Garifuna to Belize with a national holiday. Festivities include a reenactment of the said arrival via canoes onshore, but even from the night before, the party kicks off with drumming, punta dancing and imbibing throughout the evening.

Dangriga also hosts the Christmas and New Year Cultural Celebrations, with masked, costumed dancers performing the Charikanari and the Wanaragu or Jonkunu (John Canoe) dance through the streets of town.

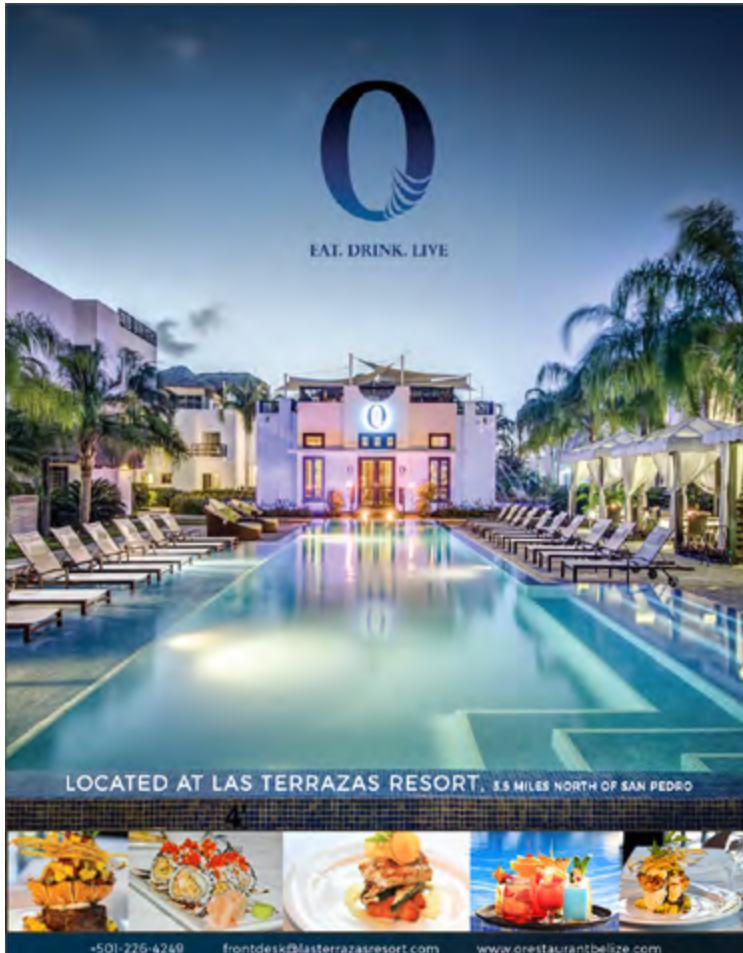
Is it Hopkins?

With a population of just around 1,000, do the numbers detract from Hopkins' mark on the Garifuna culture? A small, charming village that is fiercely proud of its ancestry, Hopkins is also home to drum schools, welcoming curious onlookers to try their hand at drumming, dancing, and eating delicious Hudut, Serre, Ereba or drinking some Hiu.

Celebrations are also loud and exuberant, hosting Hopkins Day with drum ceremonies lasting all night and into the morning, dancing, story-telling and more. Known as one of the friendliest communities in Belize, Hopkins is a true contender for the title of culture capital.

Continued on Page 19

September-October 2016





Where is the Garinagu Culture Capital?

Continued from Page 18

Is it Seine Bight?

Located two-and-a-half miles south of Maya Beach on the Placencia Peninsula, Seine Bight also holds around 1,000 inhabitants, primarily Garinagu. Mostly engaged in fishing, but now turning to tourism, Seine Bight is a key player in the culture of the Garifuna. Traditional drumming, singing and dancing is still practiced, as is their native religion, the Dugu.

A culture can be defined by its food, and if that is the case, we ALL win throughout Stann Creek. Rich homemade breads, traditional foods made with the best in local produce such as yams, cassava, bananas, fish and coconut, all fit deliciously on the itinerary for someone seeking the best in traditional.

Others may argue that **Punta Gorda Town** or the village of **Barranco** (which is the oldest Garifuna settlement in Belize) in the Toledo are contenders for "Garinagu" capital, as those communities are also well known for their Garinagu populations and celebrations.

Whichever location you decide is THE capital, the winner is always going to be you. You get to explore, and immerse yourself into a culture that is spiritual and taps into your other – hidden – self...you get to taste the rich food, dance to the beating of the drums while the breeze wafts from the Caribbean Sea where so many of their ancestors sailed to safety. You get to enjoy one of Belize's most vibrant, beautiful cultures, the Garifuna.

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