

FREE



My Beautiful Belize

TRAVEL PUBLICATION

| February 2018 | Vol. 06 #02 |

Connecting Landscapes across the Belize Wildlife Corridor



From the Editor *Tamara Sniffin*

Passion fuels inspiration, and one of the best things about inspiration is how darn contagious it can be! Just a little bit can brush off and the next thing you know you are infected in a GOOD way! In keeping with our 2018 theme of conservation, our My Beautiful Belize issue this month is brimming with stories that not only inspire you to care about preservation, but about others who have committed their lives to it, infecting us with their passion along the way. Even our article about coconut oil emphasizes using every part of the nut, from the water to the husk, and we learn that this tropical resource is the gift that just keeps on giving. This lesson can inspire us to find ways not to waste parts of a resource that could be utilized somehow...heck, coconut husks even make great biodegradable landfill!

This passionate issue also shares a couple's love for Belize and why time and again they return to this country. They happily share with us "Why Belize" holds a special place in their hearts, and who knows, maybe they will inspire you to make a return trip some time to Belize! And, talk about inspiring? After reading more about Oasis Spa we are quite certain you will be inspired to be pampered at their lovely over-the-water spa. Finally, we can't leave out the annual Carnaval de San Pedro! If this three-day festival of music, dancing and painting doesn't inspire you to join in the fun you need to have your passion meter checked!

We welcome you to our gorgeous country where our passion will undoubtedly inspire you to love *My Beautiful Belize*.



About the front page

The Cockspur (*Acacia cornigera*), sometimes called the Bullhorn or Cow Thorn is relatively common in riparian and swamp habitats such as the lowland savannas of Belize. The plant has a symbiotic relationship with an aggressive and painful species of ant that lives in its thorns and attacks other insects, humans, and animals that come in contact with it. Maya medicine uses the Cockspur bark and root to slow down snake venom from entering the bloodstream and acne and other skin conditions can be treated by bathing in water in which the thorns have been boiled.

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Published by *The San Pedro Sun LTD.*



Important Information

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.

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

AA Meetings: Monday – Saturday, 6PM, #5 Boca Del Rio. 226-2020. Every Tuesday & Friday, 12 noon at the Catholic parish hall. Front street, 630-0752.

Al-Anon Meetings: Wednesdays, 5:30PM, SP Catholic Church Hall. 608-3924 / islabon-itaalanon@yahoo.com

Narcotics Anonymous: *By request* at 623-0316.

Emergency veterinarian care: 610-3647

American Crocodile Education Sanctuary/ACES – Don't take matters into your own hands. Call 623-7920 for crocodile problems.

Saga Society A non-profit "humane society" to address the stray cat and dog population in San Pedro. Phone 226-3266.

SP Town Library - 206-2028.

SP Post Office - 206-2260.

National Aids Commission Island Committee (NACIC) - HIV Testing/ Treatment/Stigma and Discrimination and Pre and Post Test Counseling. 650-7021.



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Connecting Landscapes across the Belize Wildlife Corridor

By Tamara Sniffin

You probably live in a nice community that provides you with all the essentials needed to survive. We aren't talking about having Wi-Fi, home-delivered pizza, and cable TV; we are talking about animal essentials, like food, water, shelter and someone to reproduce with. Imagine what life would be like if every time you went for groceries the store got further away, or now there was a six-lane highway you had to cross to get to it. What about dating?

An essential piece of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor

Today, we live in a very interconnected world. This is something that conservationists have learned when studying the species that they are trying to protect. It's not good enough to create protected habitats that are isolated, like islands surrounded by roads, fences, farmlands, cities, etc. That's not how most species have evolved. Their habitats need to be connected to others via wildlife corridors if life is to really thrive and be robust enough to survive in the long-term.

Roughly 26% of Belizean land and sea is preserved within a total of 95 reserves, which vary in purpose and level of protection. Most of the protected land is comprised of two conservation blocks, the Selva Maya area in northern Belize and the Maya Mountains in southern Belize. Separated by human activities such as roads, villages and agricultural activity, the Belize Wildlife Corridor provides a unique bridge of natural habitats that connects the two blocks through unprotected and privately-owned land. In the bigger picture, this passage is a vital segment of the intercontinental Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, a region that includes Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, and some southern states of Mexico. The area acts as a natural land bridge from South America to North America, which is important for migrating animals. Due to the extensive unique habitat types, Mesoamerica contains somewhere between seven and 10% of the world's known species! In Belize, our corridor is the only connection between northerly and southerly forests at this latitude anywhere from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Patchwork preservation can be isolating

Why are these corridors so important? It is no different than living on a small island where resources and mates are limited. You aren't going to survive long without either getting off the island or new resources arrive somehow. Wildlife corridors are essential to the natural exchange of animals between populations, which may help prevent the negative effects of inbreeding and reduced genetic diversity that often occur within isolated populations. They may also help facilitate the re-establishment of popula-

Imagine all the sudden the block you lived on was surrounded by a mote of hungry crocodiles? Would you risk life and limb to find Mr. or Mrs. Right on the other side, or would you be forced to settle for the loser down the street? Yes, these scenarios seem extreme, but due to habitat loss and human encroachment, wildlife across the globe face these sorts of challenges to safely live and reproduce in their wild range.

tions that have been reduced or eliminated due to natural occurrences such as hurricanes, disease or fires. Many factors play a role in how attractive a wildlife corridor will be to animals: terrain type, vegetation cover, topography, physical barriers of various kinds, and of course, human presence, including smells and noises. Some species, such as jaguars and pumas, need thousands of square kilometers of continuous natural forest to sustain their populations. Corridors allow animals, especially large carnivores, to find ways to roam between different 'islands' without being exposed to potentially fatal dangers.

The Central Belize Corridor – an important piece of the puzzle

The most vulnerable part of the Belize Wildlife Corridor is where the Rio Bravo, Gallon Jug and Yalbac Area links with the Maya Mountains in the south. Known as the Central Belize Corridor (CBC), the territories converge at a 20-kilometer strip bisected by the busiest truck road in the country, the George Price Highway. This area represents the largest gap in the protected areas system and experts now believe that the Central Biological Corridor

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represents one of the last viable connections linking the entire Selva Maya Forest of Mexico, Belize and Guatemala and thus the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. Consisting of broadleaf tropical forests and lowland savannas, the CBC is the home and means of sustenance for game animals as well as tapir, jaguar, and puma. It is also the source of sustenance for residents from some sixteen villages living in and around the corridor that use the forest to hunt and obtain firewood. But most essentially, the forest along the Belize River keeps the water therein clean, providing ample water for the entire Belize River Valley and Belize City. This makes the CBC an area of key social, cultural, economic and biological significance.

CENTRAL BELIZE CORRIDOR



Map prepared by Dr. Rebecca Foster, Panthera

Sometimes, wildlife corridors were already present and all we need to do is protect them. For example, sometimes a narrow valley between mountains will act as a natural funnel and help bring species from one area to another. But sometimes, there are no natural corridors, and nature needs



to be helped. That's where conservation efforts come into play. In May 2013, the Government of Belize through the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development and the University of Belize through its Environmental Research Institute initiated a Management Action Planning for the Central Belize Corridor. Strategic partners included the Panthera Foundation, the German Society for International Cooperation, Ltd., the Forest Department, the Fisheries Department, Department of the Environment, the Belize Zoo, Belize Audubon Society, Community Baboon Sanctuary, the Nature Conservancy and the Rancho Dolores Environmental Group, as well as all private landowners and communities in the area. Since then countless non-profit organizations have collaborated on a variety of efforts to protect and preserve this vital corridor. One big champion is The Belize Zoo & Tropical Education Center.

Saving Wildlands for Wildlife

Located within the Central Belize Corridor, The Belize Zoo & Tropical Education Center (TBZ) in partnership with the Belize Economic and Ecological Development Fund (BEED), launched a Saving Wildlands for Wildlife campaign in March 2017 to save some of this important habitat. An online appeal through CrowdRise (www.crowdrise.com) for \$100,000 was made to purchase 945 acres of savanna and adjacent lowland tropical forest. TBZ currently safeguards more than 150 acres of private land on both sides of

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Photo Credit: Hidden Valley Inn

the George Price Highway, which provides safe passage for a multitude of wildlife moving through the area in search of food, habitat, and mates. The 945-acre property surrounds TBZ and adjoins a 1,700-acre conservation parcel. The end goal is to combine all these properties, resulting in a new protected area roughly 2,800 acres in size. Collectively, these lands provide important habitat and connectivity for a variety of rare and endangered wildlife, including jaguars, tapirs, yellow-headed parrots, and a host of migratory birds. Preserving these "wildlands" will greatly empower the Central Belize Corridor, and enhance Belize's vital network of National Protected Areas.

On January 3, 2018, TBZ posted on their Facebook page that through the incredible outpouring of support from near and far, the CrowdRise fundraiser had secured over \$71,000US. They also announced that TBZ had recently been awarded a grant proposal through the IUCN's Small Grants for the Purchase of Nature program. This award, when combined with the CrowdRise funds, will bring them within reach of securing the land purchase, but they are still in need of donations.

Sometimes nature needs help

It always feels good to be a part of the bigger picture, even when all it takes is protecting 2,800 acres of land that sometimes doesn't look like much, especially the savanna area. Knowing that this area is an essential link for not only wildlife in Belize but for those who depend on the intercontinental Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, your US tax-deductible donation is far-reaching. For more information on how you can help, please visit the TBZ CrowdRise campaign at <https://www.crowdrise.com/central-belize-corridor-land-preservation>.

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Carnaval is color, tradition and celebration!

By Mary Gonzalez

A pre-Lenten festivity that was once widely practiced in northern Belize, the Carnaval tradition has managed to survive in a few places in the country, namely Caledonia Village, Corozal District, and Ambergris Caye, Belize District.

Commencing with the enmascarados – masked dancers – groups go throughout the village signaling the start of Carnaval. This all takes place three days before Ash Wednesday and is similar to the Mardi Gras festivities in the US. During the three days of revelry, dancers go from home to home to perform 'Comparsas', which traditionally include "El Torito", "El Papalotito", "La Culebra" and "La Cinta". In recent years, the traditional Hog Head dance has been incorporated into the festivities.

On Ambergris Caye, the town of San Pedro has taken the Carnaval festivities to an entirely different level. Groups of Comparsa dancers plan months in advance, from costumes to lyrics and music, their themes vary each day. One group has remained steadfast in its commitment to only feature men, even if it means they dress in women's clothing to showcase their special dances. Known as "Cholo's Barbies", they are a big draw for spectators and have always displayed originality and humor.

Other groups combine like-minded individuals and even organizations, intent on providing the very best in entertainment. Whichever group one were to stumble on would blow you away with their synchronicity, effusive style and enthusiasm with which they indulge their rich traditions! While the Town Council has taken to judging the groups, they are all winners for embracing the culture and sharing it with those lucky to be present for the spectacle!

This year's Carnaval festivities are slated to run from Sunday, February 11th through Tuesday, February 13th. Alongside the traditional dances is the annual painting melee - having evolved from the talc, flour and ashes from back in the day, to water paints in a variety of colors. While children make up the majority of painters, the adults do no hesitate to join in - especially on 'Fat Tuesday' - when it's a 'no mercy' kind of free-for-all. Join in on the fun if you dare!

Que viva el Carnaval!



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North Ambergris Caye

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Sudoku Time!

Answers on Page 11

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



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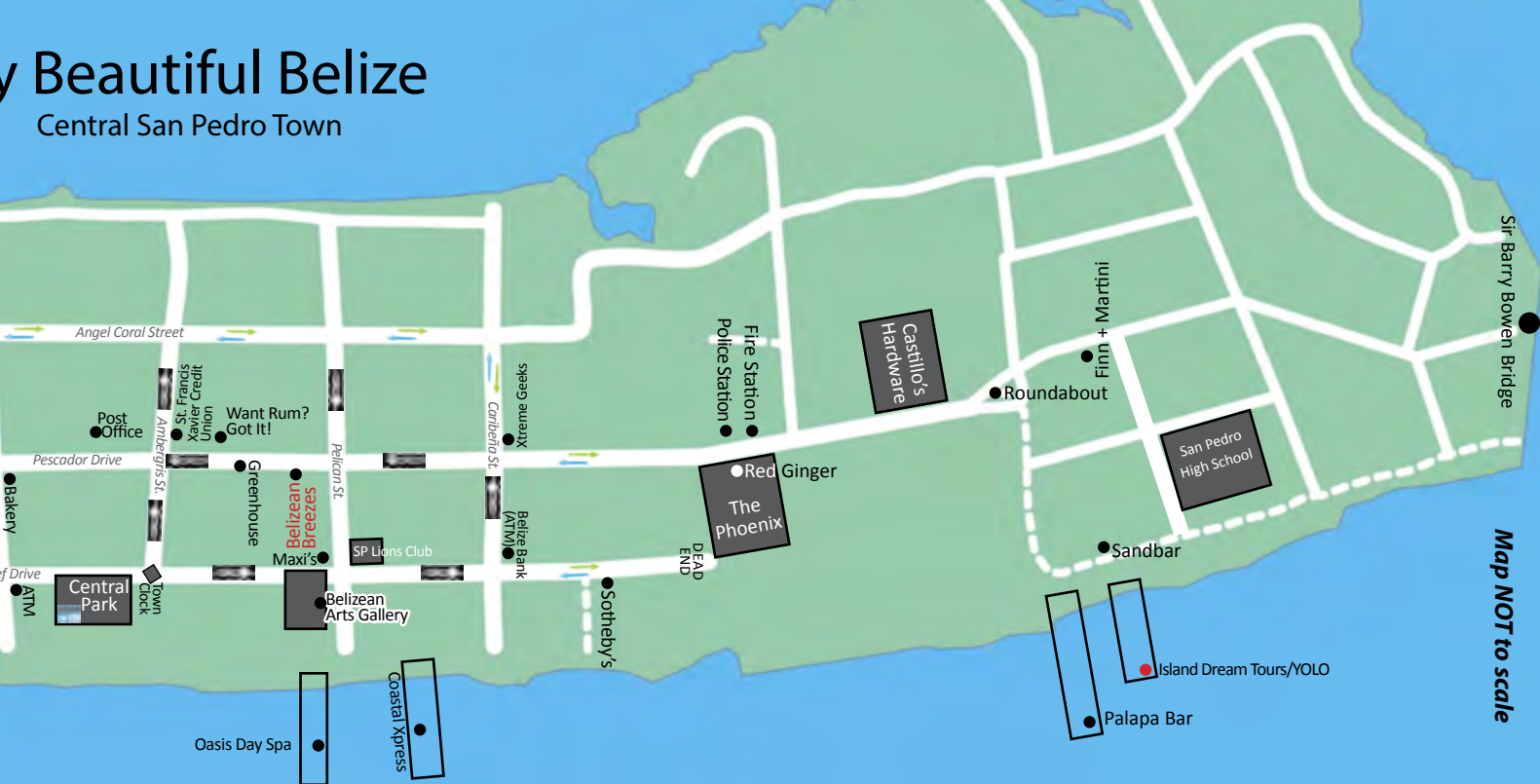
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CRAZY CANUCKS BEACH BAR: Beach bar located at Exotic Caye Beach Resort. Open daily 11am-midnight. Bar food and daily drink specials. Mondays: Live reggae @8pm Tuesdays: Live Music & Hermit Crab Racing @6:30pm Thursdays: Paint n Splash @2pm Fridays: Trivia @7pm Karaoke @8:30pm Sundays: Live music/horseshoes @3pm Follow us on Facebook. Phone: 670-8001

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. www.belize-sothebysrealty.com

UNIQUE OFFERINGS



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

Meet the man behind the binoculars; Roni Martinez

By Tamara Sniffin

For as long as he can remember, birding extraordinaire and champion for the protection of Scarlet Macaws in the Chiquibul Forest of Belize, Roni Martinez has always had a connection with nature. But his passion went further than just appreciating the beauty of his wild environment, he wanted to know what made it tick. "I wanted to understand why certain plants only grew in one type of soil or why this bird only lives in this one type of habitat...it sparked a deeper interest in understanding nature, rather than just admiring it," Roni recalls.

Born in Orange Walk Town, Roni grew up between Belmopan and Benque Viejo. In 2004 this passion led him to work as a natural history guide at Francis Ford Coppola's

Blancaneaux Lodge in the Mountain Pine Ridge area of the Cayo District. Originally honing a special interest in botany, especially orchids, Roni's world was rocked one day when he had the rare privilege of spotting a Harpy Eagle. It was an aha moment for Roni, and he jokes, "That darn Harpy...life hasn't been the same ever since! Seeing a Harpy in the wild just made me re-think what I admired more. Plants or Birds. At that time, I had not met many botanists, but I did get to know many birders, and that shifted my interest."

In 2008 Roni not only became a certified Tour Guide, but gained a deeper knowledge of birds through an Audubon Advanced Bird Ecology course in Massachusetts, USA. By 2009, Roni became Blancaneaux's first Conservation Officer, a first for Belize! His position allowed him to work along with many different researchers and conservation NGOs who shared his passion for birds, wildlife, fauna, and conservation. Over the years, he volunteered in research and conservation projects involving rare species such as Orange-breasted Falcons with The Peregrine Fund, Solitary Eagles and Stygian Owls with the Belize Raptor Research Institute and Scarlet Macaws.

While monitoring Scarlet Macaws in the Chiquibul Forest, and discovering that almost 90% of the parrots were being poached, Roni along with Charles Britt founded the Scarlet Six Biomonitoring Team. Over the years the non-profit program (NGO), which collaborates with Friends for Conservation and Development, has experienced great success in reducing illegal poaching. The Scarlet Six Biomonitoring Team has evolved into the Belize Bird Conservancy and now works with many other NGOs around Belize, not only helping to protect Scarlet Macaws but also Raptors and Yellow-headed Parrots. Roni reflects there have been many challenges and rewards, but perhaps the best reward is inspiring young Belizeans to understand why they need to act now to protect some of their own birds. "When I see them really grasp the idea and start working towards it by spreading the word... to me, that is priceless," he says.

For the last twelve years, Roni has exclusively made his living from birding. He served as the Belize Raptor Research Institute President from 2010-2016, and his work with other conservation organizations has been crucial in maintaining a proactive effort in conserving biodiversity in Belize. He currently works with the Belize



Audubon Society and assists with Bird Tourism and Terrestrial Technician in what he calls "all things bird." As a Bird Guide, Birding Consultant and Bird Guide Trainer, he doesn't prefer one over the other. "I like them all and I put each of them in their proportional place through the year. I get to do all of them, just at different points of the year."

Does he feel he is making a difference when it comes to rising conservation and preservation awareness we ask? "Yes. Because I can teach people how they can make money in their backyard while living in perfect harmony with nature. It would be great to get more women in Belize involved in Birds and Birding as it can be an amazing career. The beauty in Birding is that it's not extractive, so it's not depleted, you can make money forever from this, but because you need the habitat for this to continue, you also must advocate for habitat preservation," he responds.

Roni feels fortunate to have had many mentors through his birding career, including Lee Jones and Philip Balderamos in recent years, and in turn, he has become a mentor as well. His contagious passion has inspired countless Belizeans like Jonathan Urbina who have had the opportunity to work with him. "I first met Roni when working on the Peregrine Fund Orange-Breasted Falcon Project years ago. Roni pushed me to get my Tour Guide license, something I was reluctant to do. I got amazing training in Nicaragua thanks to him, and he believes in my skills; he thinks I am one of the best bird guides around hence his reason for hiring me when he has bigger birding tours," reflects Jonathan. "We both want to promote Belize as a Birding destination, he has excelled at it and he has asked me to be a part of it."

When Roni isn't wearing one of his many feathered-capped jobs in the Belize Birding industry he lives in the tranquil village of San Antonio at the foothills of the Maya Mountains with his wife and son.

To learn more about the Belize Bird Conservancy and how to contact Roni please visit www.belizebirdconservancy.org.

Photo Credit: Jonathan Urbina and Christian Bech



Sudoku Answers Puzzle on Page 7

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

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Coconut Oil – Flavoring Belizean Cuisine

By Janelle Cowo

Coconut oil is as synonymous to Belizean Cuisine as the tropical sea is to the Caribbean. While we surely enjoy every aspect of the coconut – its refreshingly sweet water, succulent meat and even use its husk and shell for crafts; the oil has to be my favorite use of this versatile fruit.

Used in everything from stews to pastries and of course, our delicious Rice & Beans - coconut oil is a staple in most households – used to create that perfect family meal.

This natural oil gives off a tropical aroma to kitchens across the country, and a true taste of Belize to your meal.

Coconut Oil Ingredients:

- Mature coconuts

Directions:

- Husk dried mature coconuts until only the shell remains.
- Split shell in half using a sharp cleaver or machete; coconut will still have some water in it, this can be collected for other uses.
- Scrape the meat out of the coconut shell using a spoon or scraper.
- Shred the coconut meat in a food processor; some of the coconut water can be added to moisten the mixture.
- Squeeze the mixture using a cloth or strainer, letting the milk pour into a pot for boiling.
- Boil the strained liquid, stirring constantly until the water has evaporated and the oil separates.
- Scoop the oil into a glass container; let cool.

The coconut oil is now ready to use in all your favorite dishes. Pure coconut oil will harden in cold temperatures, but easily melts once warmed up.



Belize - Our Happy Place

By Mary Gonzalez

The beauty that surrounds us Belizeans is immense and varied. Yet, caught in the throes of simply living and surviving, we might miss moments here and there. However, we get a gentle reminder when we meet people who have plotted and planned for months to visit our country. We meet them and see them trying to enjoy every second of their precious vacation time exploring Belize's wonders. Suddenly, our curiosity is piqued. Why here? What is it that draws you here, out of all the places in the world? Why Belize?



Tiffannie and Steven Piaia are from Casper, Wyoming, USA, and they have been traveling to Belize, primarily Ambergris Caye, since 2015. They became fast friends with the local bartenders and guides on the island, and soon, had a fun network to rely on for their return trips, of which there have been 10! *Talk about hooked on Belize!* They shared a little bit about their love for the country and its people.



How did you find out about Belize?

Tiffannie: We had family who had visited in the past, and wanted to return again with us! They loved Belize as well.

What made you decide to return?

Both: We fell in love with the people so quickly. Everyone treated us like family, and with no language barrier, we became fast friends. We had so much in common: sports, musical tastes, and of course, the foood!

What's your favorite food?

Tiffannie: Poppers! Honestly, anything from El Divino.

Steven: Boogie's Belly meat pies! Roast chicken from Waruguma.

Tiffannie: Elvi's Kitchen fried chicken. Butt bacon at Ak' Bol.

Both: Fresh grouper caught with local guides, and cooked by our friend Ivan.

Any favorite Belize experiences?

Both: To be honest, our favorite was when we got to go to our friends' house for a BBQ and UFC fight night – we told you we have a lot in common with our Belize friends! It meant a lot to us because we felt like part of the family, and we know that it's not something that happens everywhere. Plus, Tiffannie got introduced to her favorite grilled sausages using Running W meats! Haha!

Tiffannie: One of our most recent memorable experiences was with Jungle Splash Eco Tours in San Ignacio. Tour Operator Roberto took us on an amazing Cayo tour. Horseback riding, private boat on the river... he had been recommended to us by our friend Melvin, and it was fantastic.



Steve: On Ambergris Caye, snorkeling at Hol Chan is definitely worth it. We also try to go fishing with our friends Jaime and Adrian at least once on each trip - those friendships came about thanks to our friend Marcial.

Tiffannie: I like watching the sunrises on the island. Sometimes, I just walk up to the end of any dock and palapa to watch the sun come up. I also enjoy watching the sun set aboard El Gato. We really just love it ALL when we're down here.

Is there any place in Belize you want to visit next?

Tiffannie: We hope to spend some time in Placencia soon, and maybe do some camping in the mountains. Our friend Ivan has his own bar, Crocs, so we plan on checking that out too. Steven wants to skydive possibly, but mostly, we're looking forward to spending as much time with our friends down in Belize! It's why we keep coming back now.



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Barrier Reef Drive, San Pedro, Ambergris Caye - [facebook.com/belizeanarts.sanpedro](https://www.facebook.com/belizeanarts.sanpedro)

Paintings Jewelry Decor Crafts



Relaxed and renewed at Oasis Day Spa

By Mary Gonzalez

There's just something about taking an hour of your day to indulge in a bit of luxury. If you do it while cool sea breeze blows over your skin, while talented therapists knead and mold your muscles into submission, well, even better! Oasis Day Spa has my number when it comes to indulging, and Samirah has been known to leave me a boneless heap by the time she's massaged every knot in my body.

After the devastation that 2016's Hurricane Earl wrought on the majority of beachfront businesses, including Oasis Day Spa, it was hard to imagine whether recovery was in the cards. Thankfully, the owners and therapists were resilient, and a year later, a brand spanking new building is up on the newly constructed dock, ready to tend to your spa desires! The rustic setting is beachy and perfect, gauzy curtains blow in the breeze, seashells and wood walls in soothing tones charm you into feeling right at home!

With such marvelous delights like hot stone, Swedish, or deep tissue massages, body scrubs, facials, manicures and pedicures, there's much to choose from. The ambiance is Caribbean perfect: over the water with open windows providing light and refreshing sea breeze, but set at the right height to allow privacy while undergoing your treatment of choice. Below, the lapping of waves provides a soothing soundtrack while Jessica and/or Samirah work efficiently at working the worries out of your troubled muscles.

If you're looking for a little extra indulgence, you can also pick from a few special packages. With Valentine's Day around the corner, why not take chocolate to a whole new level? With the Empress package, you get an hour massage followed by a delicious chocolate body wrap (with chocolate from the Belize Chocolate Company) and a honey and oatmeal facial; talk about a royal treat! If you're looking to unveil baby soft skin, the Honey Citrus Full Body Sugar Scrub will ensure you emerge a whole new person, relaxed and baby smooth.

Book your appointment today, by calling 631-6970 or online at oasisspabelize.com. Of course, you can drop in during the hours of 9AM and 5PM, where you can decide on the best indulgent treatment for you.





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Where in Belize...

Despite its relatively small square mileage, a lot of Belize remains a mystery. There are so many hidden nooks that may never be discovered by all. We can't tell you how often it is we take the wrong turn down a dirt road, only to find ourselves feeling like we're in a whole new world. It's the beauty of exploring a place that remains relatively undeveloped, and if you're up for the adventure, who knows where you'll end up!



February's mystery location was a classic 'blink-and-you'll-miss-it' spot! Had we not actually stopped the car and asked for directions, we would assumed it was part of a larger settlement.

And that is all the hint we'll give you!

Join our guessing game on Instagram and Facebook, let us know if you can identify this little spot!

To find out where exactly it is, and how to get there, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @mybeautifulbelize, using the hashtag #whereinbelize. We can't wait to see your guesses!

Wolfe's Woofers The Funeral



By Dennis Wolfe

"Will you get my long pants and a decent shirt out for me?"
"Why are you wearing your good dress clothes today?" Sherry asked. "Are you going to a wedding without me?"

"No. It's a funeral."

"Oh, yes. Your fishing buddy, Don Emilio. I forgot. Isn't he Mario's uncle?"

"Yes. As a matter of fact, I'm sitting with the family because Emilio and I caught a lot of fish together over the years."

"From what I hear of the old man, he caught a lot of other things over the years."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

"From what I hear, he supposedly chased the women."

"He caught quite a few of them, too," I said. "He also chased the rum bottle a lot."

At the church I met up with Mario and his old auntie Lela. Mario is my handyman (when he wants to work) and also my good friend. I sat next to him and the widow for the funeral service.

"Friends, we are gathered here to celebrate the life of Señor Emilio Rivas," the minister said. "The man lying here before you was a good man who will be missed by all."

"H-m- p-h."

I distinctly heard old Mz. Lela give a disdainful sniff.

"Don Emilio was a thrifty, industrious person who worked long and hard to support his wife and family."

She sniffed again. It was almost a snort.

"He was known to be a faithful and honest man, not given to any vices."

The old lady squirmed in her seat.

"He did like the occasional drink but he never overindulged in anything."

"Mario! Mario!" the old lady whispered loudly.

"Yes, Tía."

"Go up there and look in that casket to make sure it's your Tío Emilio in there."

February 2018

Belize in February!

February 10th and 11th
Placencia BTIA Sidewalk
Art Festival
Placencia Peninsula
Starting at 9AM daily



February 11th to 13th
El Gran Carnaval de San Pedro
at San Pedro Town Central Park
starting at 3PM daily!



February 14th
Burning of Don Juan Carnaval
at San Pedro Town Central
Park, 7PM

February 17th
Miss Deb's
Golf Tournament
Consejo Shores,
Corozal Town,
11AM

February 20th
Baubles, Bangles and Beads
Create Your Own Jewelry
at Palapa Bar and Grill, San Pedro
Town from 1PM to 4PM

February 24th
Street Art Festival
Albert Street, Belize City
2PM to 10PM

February 17th
Chiquibul Challenge
Marathon, Las Cuevas
Research Station,
Chiquibul Park
bzwildlifeclinic@gmail.com

February 25th
Rovers Car Show
Cheers Restaurant
George Price Highway
Starting at 1PM

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