

From the Editor Tamara Sniffin

Where will you find yourself in Belize? Atop a mountain trail overlooking the expanse of a majestic valley, floating on an inner tube through a dark cave sporting a flashlight on your head, snorkeling through coral gardens in hopes of spotting a sea turtle or perhaps zipping through a tree-top canopy? Regardless of where your Belizean adventure takes you, our mantra is tread lightly and be kind to the environment.

As tourism grows in Belize so does the concern for the effects it has on our environment. Roughly 26% of Belizean land and sea is preserved within a total of 95 reserves,



which vary in purpose and level of protection. Over the years we have worked hard to establish these precious areas, and many of them are now popular tourism destinations, and why not? We're talking about the crown jewels of our country! We're fortunate to have access to many of these places, but visiting them comes with great responsibility. We visit natural areas for many reasons, among them to explore nature's mysteries and surprises, and this includes underwater discovery as well. When we come across pretty shells, coral, rocks, plants, feathers, fossils, artefacts and other objects of interest, and choose to leave then where they were found, we pass the gift of discovery on to those who follow. It is also illegal to collect many of these items, such as fossils and artefacts. Take a photo and remember the moment, not the memento.

Ultimately, we need to make good decisions about caring for our natural and cultural heritage areas and as a general rule be considerate of the specifics of each area in terms of culture, wildlife, vegetation, soil, climate, and number of people. Then, use this information to choose the best ways to enjoy these areas sustainably. By doing so you assure that generations to follow will enjoy all there is to discover in My Beautiful Belize.

About the cover: Pok Ta Pok is a Maya ball game that involves the use of hips and thighs to volley a heavy rubber ball between two teams in an attempt to lob it through a hoop. Featured are the Belize national team Ek Balam (Black Jaguars) from Yo Creek, Orange Walk, as they demonstrate a few moves during 'A Day in San Antonio' in the Cayo District.

www.mybeautifulbelize.com

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 / islabonitaalanon@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.



Let's Go Home: A Maya village in the hills of Cayo taught our associate editor the definition of hometown pride when she returned and saw how her people have thrived while upholding traditions P. 3

Integrated conservation: BFREE approaches conservation by educating the local people about their environment and getting them personally invested in the protection of it P. 6

Flying Around: Let Tropic Air take you all over Belize! P. 13

Private Island Paradise: Cayo Espanto is synonymous with luxury, privacy and beyond excellent service. P. 14

Sustainable eating: Laws regarding conch and lobster season exist for a reason: to conserve the tasty creatures for our future! P. 16

Unassuming yet delicious: The Tamarind fruit is a surprise package, with many delicious uses! P. 17

More amazing conservation news: Organizations and individuals all over Belize continue to make strides in protecting and preserving her! P. 18

Where in Belize...June's location revealed



Tumul K'in Center of Learning is a registered non-governmental Maya Organization that responds to the challenges of poverty and marginalization in rural Toledo by promoting a sustainable development with identity through intercultural education, training and research fusing modern and Maya values, knowledge and philosophy. Tumul K'in is a Mopan Maya word that means "A new Day", a name that is quite fitting since this institution, via its programmatic areas of work, offers a new light and a new hope for the Maya people of Toledo and Belize.

Tumul K'in is located in the heartland of Toledo on 500 acres of land neighbouring the beautiful village of Blue Creek.

To join our guessing game, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @mybeautifulbelize, using the hashtag #whereinbelize.

You can also send us your images of mystery locations to add to our guessing game! Send them to hello@mybeautifulbelize.com and join the fun!

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

For detailed stories and many more beautiful photos, visit www.mybeautifulbelize.com
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We're Social! Follow Us: @mybeautifulbelize













Ko'ox Tanah.. For nearly two years, I'd been envisioning my return home. My head has been filled with fantasies of hot corn tortillas straight from the firehearth, maybe some local chicken escabeche, definitely bollos, k'ol, fresh local eggs, and a walk or two up and down the hills before going back for round two.

I mean, doesn't everyone pretty

much regress to gluttony when they go back home?

Okay, so I also wanted to catch up with family friends, hang out with some of my cousins who went from diaper buddies to pretty cool grown-ups. Oh, and there was this event happening called "Uh P'eh Ki'n Ich Tanah" - A Day in San Antonio. Thanks to Tropic Air, my arrival took little time with a direct flight to Maya Flats. A cab and short bus ride later, and I was back in my natal village.

San Antonio Village in the Cayo District is, in my very biased opinion, a stunning little community. Also known as Tanah, she is nestled in a valley, surrounded by peaks and mountains that can tell you when the rains will start, that keep a running soundtrack of birdsong, and give you fresh air that can't compete with anything. When you hit the first hilltop leading down into the village, she spreads out far and wide, smokestacks spilling from the old-fashioned fogons (firehearths) where hot fresh flour and corn tortillas are being made by hand. Cows and horses graze in pastures, some plots of land are in grids with a bounty produce (mostly peanuts), and trees and

flowers fill most yards. What Tanah is for me however, is home. Born and raised there, my 'tuch' (navel) is buried somewhere in that valley. It is in Tanah that I ran away from my house at 3, eager to go to school. It was in Tanah that I learned how children are the best ambassadors of humanity.

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Ke'ex Tanah Continued from Page 3

Back in 1984: "Bi'ix a ka'aba?" (What is your name?) ... "Ko'ox ba'axa!" (Let's play!)

The words were confusing, but not unfamiliar. They were Mayan. It only took a week, but a gaggle of curious village children found themselves embracing this brown-skinned, curly haired little girl. I learned their language, and in the process truly came into my culture. That part of me remains a source of great pride, and thus to Tanah I returned.

The people at Ask & Belize organized a day celebrating the awesomeness of this gorgeous village, focusing on her Yucatec Maya people, the food, the art, her location and her history. Tanah was home to one of the most famous medicinal Shamans of Belize: Don Elijio Panti. Tanah also raised the slate-carving Garcia Sisters. She has a minor archaeological mound at her outskirts called Pacbitunich (planted stones), and an honorary medicinal trail/reserve has been named after Don Elijio. Her current inhabitants continue the tradition of upholding the San Antonio name.

The big day dawned hot and sunny, and I wondered out loud if the day would fulfill its ambitious planned schedule. I clearly had been away for too long, as I apparently forgot how hard-working the people of the village are. By the time I made the trek into the venue, tents had been raised, booths prepped and laid out, archaeological artifacts were on display, and a bike race route mapped and marked. Doctors were offering free medical care, and lines were formed already. Artwork was on display, labeled in both English and Mayan, teaching about conservation, preservation and education.

On stage a group of elder men played on the marimba, the sweet tinkle of music providing the background music for a day of recognition. Cultural dances featured young children in traditional outfits. I was taken back to that moment I was accepted despite my difference when the dancers switched from Mestizo dances to the effusive punta dance of the Creole culture! That then segued into a hog head dance that featured three generations entertaining an amused crowd.

Food booths sold delicious local chicken escabeche, pork pibil, barbecue, tamales and more delicious local fare. Curious tourists and other Belizeans from near and far dropped in throughout the day to

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Ke'ex Tanah Continued from Page 4



witness a celebration of all things San Antonio.

The highlight of the day, besides the bicycle race, was a fantastic demonstration of the Maya ball game Pok Ta Pok. Belize's national team, Ek Balam took center stage to show their world-championship moves. Curious children and teenagers eagerly joined the fray afterwards to attempt a few plays of their own.

All around, I could see a mixture of people filled with curiosity and eager smiles. Their voices mingled Creole, English and my beloved Mayan. The photos I snapped showed me the faces of a people who had evolved over the years. They adapted to modern society, producing doctors, chefs, artists and artisans, media-savvy youth, organic farmers, mothers, fathers, children. They were welcoming, proud to be San Antonio residents, and most of all, proud to be Maya. It didn't matter the number of years I'd been away, the language returned with ease as I spoke to a few of my elders. I too am proud of my Maya heritage, but most importantly, I'm proud to be from Tanah.









Ornella "Nelly" Cadle, a field course leader at the Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education (BFREE) station, grew up in the Bladen Village. She spent her childhood surrounded by the vibrant Belizean rainforest, living with thousands of colorful plants, a myriad of unique mammals and numerous endangered species. Yet, she did not fully understand or appreciate the diverse organisms around her until she began working at BFREE.

Cadle joked that for much of her life she thought that the jaguar tracks she had seen were just from dogs. She loved watching the vibrant birds in her village but could only identify them by their features and sounds, rather than specific names.

In 2014, Cadle was hired to guide education programs in the rainforest around BFREE. Once at BFREE, Cadle began learning about the rainforest and the ecological roles of the organisms within it. She also learned to identify each of "her" birds by their names. "It's no longer just something I fancy," Cadle said about how her curiosity for the rainforest has now developed into reverence since working at BFREE.

BFREE is a private research and educational facility that was established by Jacob Marlin in 1995 to develop a program to conserve the Bladen Nature Reserve. This organization has changed the way Belize approaches conservation by educating the local people about their environment and getting them personally invested in the protection of it. "In order to make a difference you must get involved with the community and people," said Michael Dobbins, a Ph.D. researcher who works with Cadle in the rainforest around BFREE.

When Dobbins first started re-

searching terrestrial mammals in Belize, conservation seemed to be done on a strictly academic level. Collegiate researchers came in, completed their project and then wrote a scientific paper to be published. But that wasn't enough to encourage the community to join the conservation efforts, Dobbins

The locals respect the wildlife, Heather Barrett, deputy director of BFREE, said. Unfortunately, they also need the wildlife for food and money, making it hard

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Integrated Conservation in Belize Continued from Page 6

to balance conservation with the community's needs.

However, if you understand the local people and their motivation for doing things, you will have an easier time showing them how conservation directly affects them, Dobbins added.

BFREE trains local citizens to identify the organisms that they share the environment with and use as resources to sustain their community. BFREE provides eco tours, field courses and outreach programs to educate people about the rainforest. This training not only informs the citizens about what is around them, but it also allows them to develop a personal connection with their environment. Integrating the community into conservation efforts and helping them foster an interest in their environment has proven to be a sustainable and effective way to protect natural resources for the long term.

Yet, BFREE's work showed that successful conservation not only requires the community to be emotionally invested in the protection

of their environment, but it also entails working with the local community to develop practical, sustainable ways to use their nat-







ural resources. In many of the communities that surround these degrading ecosystems the local people have more urgent concerns – like feeding their families – than conserving their environment. Thus, conservation must also look to support the

people in these communities so that residents have the means to be able to protect their environment along with their livelihoods.

"Any attempt to conserve the natural environments in these ecologically sensitive areas must include innovative solutions to improve the socio-economic conditions of the communities," Colin Young, author of a 2008 study on conservation in Belize, said.

There are many ways to use the natural resources in Belize to benefit the community without having to destroy the environment, Cadle said. BFREE educates locals about some of these sustainable methods, such as making money through eco-tourism, rather than killing the wildlife to sell.

Many people in Belize have used slash-andburn farming to produce enough crops to support their livelihoods, but that practice is burning down the rainforest. Because of slash-and-burn agriculture, coastal development and illegal logging Belize currently has a deforestation rate that is two times higher than that of Central America. If the current deforestation rate in Belize continues, the forest cover will decrease to 58 percent by 2020 and be completely gone in the next 40 years.

As a sustainable alternative to slash-andburn, BFREE gave the local community cacao seeds to plant. Cacao farming allowed the community to still produce a profitable yield, but in a way that requires less resources, provides a habitat for migratory birds and does not contribute to deforestation.

The future of conservation in Belize seems bright, as the community has steadily stepped in to conserve and sustain their land. With the help of local volunteers, BFREE has established the Hicatee Conservation and Research Center (HCRC), as well as documented the rediscovery of the endangered Harpy Eagle in their film "Wings of Hope."

This conservation, however, is not the only goal of BFREE's programs. Barrett hopes that community members and tourists not only gain an understanding of the rainforest when they visit, but also a love for it. "I hope people can take away a love for nature or at least respect for it, especially rainforests. They have huge value," Barrett said.



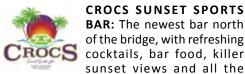
Across from Atlantic Bank * Call 615-7395





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. 4PM to 10PM. 668-2156.



CROCS SUNSET SPORTS BAR: The newest bar north of the bridge, with refreshing cocktails, bar food, killer

games on large-screen TVs. Book upstairs bar for private events. Open from 11am everyday.



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!



- 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. AJI TAPA BAR RESTAURANT: Beachfront dining in a romantic setting. One of a kind 5-Star Tapa Bar and Restaurant situated on the enchanting island of Ambergris Caye. Open all week, 5PM-10PM, except on Tuesdays. Open Friday, Saturday & Sunday for lunch. Call +501-226-4047 for reservations.



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.



PIRATE'S NOT SO SECRET BEACH BAR & GRILL: The island's trending destination; adventure to SECRET BEACH! Soak up the sun or take a dip

in crystal clear shallow waters accompanied with island music, refreshing cocktails, gourmet lunch menu by AWARD WINNING CHEF. Credit Cards Accepted. Open daily 10am to SUNSET!

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.



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 in Tres Cocos, before the Truck Stop. 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.

WHITE SANDS DIVE SHOP: A PADI 5 star Dive shop in San Pedro Town on Ambergris Caye teaching scuba diving and certifying divers, as well as providing daily Diving and Snorkeling adventures to the beautiful Belize Barrier Reef. Scheduled (local) departures are at 9:00AM, and they pick you up at the hotel dock. 226-2405.



MARUBA BEACH KLUB @ Secret Beach - The ultimate SOLAR / OFF the GRID beach experience! Stylish, sleek lounge chairs & bean bag floats. EAT • DRINK • SPA • SWIM •

SUNSETS. Open 11-5PM 4 miles from main road. BOAT TRANSFERS available by reservation call 610-3775/9

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!

SuDoku Time! Answers on Page 19									
		3	6	5		9		1	
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		1	7		4	6			
							5		
	7	2				4	6		
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EATS & TREATS

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!





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.



SANDBAR: BEST PIZZAS ON THE ISLAND! Sandbar hosts an amazing happy hour special: \$10BZD wood-fired pizzas and 2-for-1 rums on weekdays (3-6PM) and beer and wing specials on the weekend (11am-4pm). Enjoy your

afternoon or evening at the bar, tables, or chaise lounges on the beach!



FINN AND MARTINI: The only Martini house in Belize. Serving International cuisine with local infusion in a chic and eclectic setting. We are Fodor's 2017 top choice. Visit our Facebook page for hours or call

623-4789 for reservations.



JUICE DIVE: Belize's first cold press juicery, we offer juice cleanses, daily specials, fresh organic Juice Dive salads and wraps, VEGAN options and so much more healthy, delicious cuisine. Open 7 days a week, 7AM-8PM...Pescador Drive...615-7395



IGUANA JUAN'S: Serving thoughtful burgers, killer vegetarian and creative cocktails in an eclectic top floor space overlooking Back Street. Professional stand-up comedy,

Saturday reggae brunch and other unique events. Open 11 -10 Tue. - Sun. Come Find Us!



POCO LOCO'S: Fabulous food court located in the heart of San Pedro Town on Barrier Reef Drive. Choose from delicious crepes and desserts, salad bar and soups, creative burgers and vegan options, mission style burritos and

tasty libations. Charming décor in a relaxed atmosphere.

TRANSPORTATION

CRYSTAL AUTO RENTALS - 2 BZ locations: Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport and 5 Miles Northern Highway. Free shuttle service to and from our Belize City office to anywhere in Belize City. Tel: 011-501-223-1600 Fax: 011-501-223-1900 (direct dialing from U.S.A.) Toll Free in Belize: 0-800-777-7777 Email: reservations@ crystal-belize.com or visit our website at http://crystal-belize.com

COASTAL XPRESS WATER TAXI - Scheduled ferry service & water taxi for Ambergris Caye. Phone 226-3007.

GET TRANSFERS - Executive transfer and tour services anywhere in Belize: Chetumal, Cancun, Quintana Roo & even Merida and Guatemala. Phone: 422-2485 (Fx: 422-3511) or email: info@ gettransfers.com.

RAINBOW TAXI – Cave Caulker golf cart; guided island tours; reliable service. 226-0123. Minerva: 661-6254 or Champ 602-8136.



Unique Offerings

BELIZEAN BREEZES

SOAP CO.: We have two

(2) new locations! You asked for more all natural products so we needed the space to add them all. From bars to guest soaps, cupcake soaps and ton of fun! A full line of affordable and unique jewelry and gift items. 9AM-9PM; Mon –Sat; 226-4322. Pescador Drive & Barrier Reef Drive.



BELIZE CHOCOLATE COMPANY: The first ever chocolate boutique in Belize, makes bean to bar chocolate on Ambergris Caye, together with delicious truffles, tasty hot and cold chocolate drinks and unique chocolate gifts. Located on Front Street. Call 226 3015.

GRANIEL'S DREAMLAND: Exotic Hard Woods and Mahogany Products made locally. Gift Items, indoor and outdoor furniture, carvings, and custom-made orders. Worldwide Shipping.



Free Delivery to Hotel, Airport or Boat within town limits. 226-2938, Pescador Drive. granielsdreamland2@yahoo.com, www. granielsdreamlandbelize.com Facebook: Graniels Dreamland



"12" is the only shop in Belize that features only Belizean made luxury products & gifts suitable for both locals and tourists. Featuring exclusive items from around the country from soaps & scrubs to handbags & sauces, we ship same day throughout Belize. www.12belize.com 670-5272.



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!

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

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.

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.

SANDY POINT REAL ESTATE: Making Your Dreams of Owning Real Estate in Belize a Reality! Exclusively listing Wyndham Grand Venezia del Caribe properties. We are located on Barrier Reef Drive. For more info visit www.sandypointrealestate.com

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

PARTY PARTY



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.



WANT RUM? GOT IT! 100% Belizean Rums. Travellers Liquors FACTORY OUTLET and showroom! Home of world class and award winning rums. Wholesale and retail. Daily complementary rum tastings of over 25 products! www.facebook.com/wantrum #15 Pescador Drive

226-4690.

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!





SANDY TOES BEACH BAR: Enjoy our sandy Boca del Rio beachfront and swimming area, or sit inside the bar with our 40" Flat Screen TVs. Live music Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday Beach BBQ. Kitchen open daily 10AM – 11PM. Best island vibe in San Pedro!



EATS & TREATS



ISLAND BUZZ CAFÉ: A cozy friendly café serving Breakfast and Lunch all day, at least until 1:00ish Monday-Friday. Sometimes Saturday. Hardly ever on Sunday. Coffee, Bacon & Eggs, Biscuits & Gravy, Breakfast Burritos, Subs, Paninis, Smoothies. Call ahead or delivery 668-1322.

PEPPERONI'S PIZZA: The island's most delectable combination of traditional Italian crafted pizzas with Belizean influences. Handmade, local, and fresh ingredients made daily along with good vibes, music, and service. Dine-in, carry-out, & delivery offered. Open 7 days a week at 4:30pm-10:00pm. 501-226-4515





CASA PICASSO RESTAURANT: Tapas dining in an artful setting. Global flavors from local ingredients...martinis, wines, cocktails. Vegetarian & gluten-free options. Open Tuesday-Sunday at 5:30pm. Last reservations 9:00pm. 226-4443 or reservations@casapicassobelize.com. Located south of town past Caribeña Gas Station & Belikin Distributor. Find us on Facebook or casapicassobelize.com.

El DIVINO CARIBBEAN STEAKHOUSE & MARTINI BAR: Banana Beach's signature restaurant, featuring indoor and outdoor dining and sports lounge. Serving USDA meats, wood fired pizza, fresh seafood, pastas...locals LOVE our ceviche! Daily dinner and drink



pastas...locals LOVE our ceviche! Daily dinner and drink specials, Happy Hour from 3-7pm. 226-2444.



HIDDEN TREASURE RESTAURANT: Serving Latin American & Caribbean cuisine in an enchanting atmosphere. Serving dinner Wednesday-Monday from 5pm - 90pm, closed on Tuesdays. Located in the Escalante neighborhood. Live music on Thursdays! Free shuttle service to customers in town. Contact us 226-4111/4236 and

www.hiddentreasurebelize.com

THE PALMILLA RESTAURANT AT VICTORIA HOUSE: A casual experience with a unique mix of island seafood and continental cuisine. Relaxed and informal yet romantic. Admiral Nelson Bar is the place to be casual and relax in your swimsuit, enjoying breakfast, lunch and dinner with magnificent views. Reservations recommended: 226-2067.



BLACK ORCHID RESTAURANT & LOUNGE: Come visit us; just a quick Golf Cart Ride 2 1/2 miles South of Town after the Croc Pond Lagoon and well before the Marco Gonzalez Maya Site. Open Tuesday through Saturday; Happy Hour: 3PM-5PM, Dinner: 5:30-9PM. Reservations Recommended (501) 206-2441. www.blackorchidrestaurant.com.

PARTY PARTY! CRAZY CANUCKS BEACH BAR: Beach bar located at Exotic Caye Beach Resort.

Open daily11am-midnight. Bar food and daily drink specials. Mondays: Live reggae @8pm Tuesdays: Live Music & Hermit Crab Racing @6:30pm Thursdays: Paint n Splash @2pm Fridays: Trivia @7pm Karaoke @8:30pm Sundays: Live music/horseshoes @3pm Follow us on Facebook. Phone: 670-8001

Unique Offerings

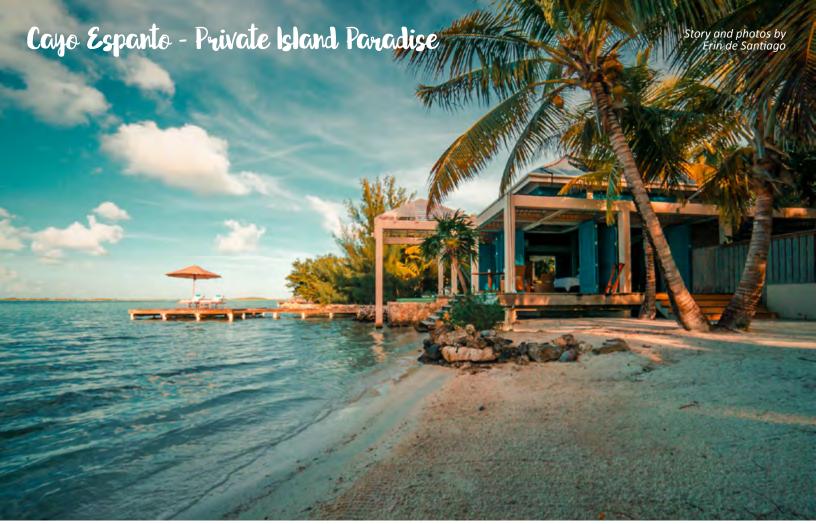


CAYE COFFEE ROASTING COMPANY: Local fresh roasted coffee manufactured in San Pedro Town. Available throughout Ambergris Caye and countrywide. M-F: 8:30-4:30, Sat: 8:30-noon. ONLINE WEB STORE, NOW OPEN!!! For more information visit http://www.cayecoffee.bz.









Located just three miles off the coast of Ambergris Caye is the ultra-exclusive private island, Cayo Espanto. Attracting a mix of discerning luxury travelers and A-list celebrities, this five-star resort features seven private villas, including one over-the-water bungalow. If you've ever fantasized about a private island getaway with round the clock pampering and gourmet cuisine, rest assured - Cayo Espanto is the stuff dreams are made of!

You won't have to wait until your arrival to realize how special this vacation is going to be - the pampering starts the minute you make your reservation. An e-mail questionnaire fleshes out important details like the time you prefer your morning coffee, what your dream dinner is, and how much pampering do you want. If you're celebrating a special occasion, let them know as the staff will do their best to make it happen.

Complimentary transfers to Cayo Espanto depart from Ambergris Caye via a quick 10-minute boat ride. Before you even have time to



settle in on the boat, you're already being delivered to your villa's private dock, where the entire staff is on hand to welcome you.

We spent two magical nights in Casa Olita, a 1,500-square-foot one-bedroom villa with a private plunge pool and alfresco shower. The king bed is perfectly situated to take advantage of the stunning

views of the shallow turquoise waters only steps away. High-end furnishings, luxurious toiletries, a mini-fridge fully-stocked with sodas and local beers, and an iPad are just a few of the amenities you'll find in your villa.

From the moment we arrived, two attentive 'housemen' took care of everything we needed. Guests have the option to have the staff nearby or on call via walkie-talkies in each villa. Service is well-orchestrated and takes place almost behind the scenes. As you enjoy a romantic dinner under the stars, your housemen are preparing your villa for the night, while ensuring each course arrives at precisely the right moment.

The food is some of the best you'll find in Belize, thanks to Chef Patrick and his talented team. The menu changes each day of your stay, and portions are plentiful. Start the day with a fresh fruit plate and coffee while perusing the breakfast menu. Want to try multiple dishes? Or only a half-order? Again, your wishes are facilitated without batting an eye, right down to a half-order of eggs benedict! One of the dining highlights of our trip — a surprise dessert bonfire on the beach.

Guests at Cayo Espanto are free to be as active or relaxed as they want. Go paddle boarding and kayaking around the island, arrange a snorkel tour, or spend an



afternoon fly fishing. In-villa massages are arranged by appointment. The waters immediately surrounding the island are too shallow for swimming, but there is a swim platform and water trampoline you can easily kayak or paddle board out to.

We opted to spend our days relaxing in the plunge pool, kayaking, sampling signature cocktails, getting massages, and enjoying the ridiculously comfortable bed. The least favorite part of our trip? Watching the Cayo Espanto boat pull up to our dock and realizing we had to head back to reality. However, even the departure was ceremonious as the staff assembled on the dock once again to say goodbye and give us personalized copies of our menus and a delicious to-go lunch.

Off-season rates at Cayo Espanto start at USD\$1,595 a night, which includes meals and drinks (wine and Champagne excluded) and non-motorized watersports.









There's nothing like fresh sea food and our Belizean bounty is something to savor with every bite. However, the careful management of our marine resources is essential to the sustainability of two quintessential Caribbean delicacies; lobster and conch.

Responsible tourism means being "in the know" when it comes to dining out or purchasing product from a local fisherman. If you are offered lobster or conch when it is out of season, your refusal to purchase it helps to discourage illegal fishing while insuring productive harvests in the future. This time of year marks important season dates, with lobster season opening on June 15th and conch season closing on July 1st.

During the closed conch fishing season, everyone is reminded that no person or establishment shall have in possession any conch in accordance with Laws of Belize regulations. The season is set to re-open on October 1, 2018, and during that time, the public is advised that the Queen Conch shell should exceed seven inches in length, and that establishments should not have diced conch meat in their possession. For conch flesh that has been processed as market clean, the weight should exceed three ounces, while filleted flesh which is completely processed white meat should exceed 2.75 ounces. Failure to follow these regulations, whether it pertains to illegal harvesting of conch or possessing undersized conch, will be subjected to penalties under the Fisheries Act.

Lobster lovers can enjoy the tasty crustacean from now until February 14, 2019, when the season closes for four months. During this open season there are still some regu-



hite Sands lations in place, with no person allowed to remove from the waters of Belize or buy, sell or have in his possession lobster with a cape length less than three **Ambergris Caye** inches or tail weight less than four ounces, or fillet or diced lobster tail meat, except under a special permit issued by the Fisheries Administrator. Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of the Fisheries Act commits an offense shall be liable on summary convictions as stipulated in the Fisheries Act. During the closed season, no traps are to be set, and no one should consume lobster products. If someone is caught in possession of lobster during this time, that person can be charged a fine or even possibly face jail time, with penalties starting from \$500 dollars or up to two years imprisonment. Closed seasons coincide with reproductive seasons and are a critical time for populations to recuperate strengthen and recover. Without this protection, these populations would most cer-Free pick up from your dock.
www.whitesandsdiveshop.com tainly disappear within our area, not only having

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a detrimental effect on our marine ecosystem but diminishing the livelihood of local fisherfolk and culinary tourism. We thank you for doing your part

in assuring the sustainable management of these

important and tasty marine creatures.

Tamarinds

A deliciously unexpected surprise

By Mary Gonzalez

Brown, hollow-sounding, unassuming pods; at a glance, one would probably eye it curiously then grab a more familiar fruit. Those in the know however, will fill as big a bag as they can, already envisioning some tasty snacks, juice, cooking paste or perhaps even medicine! The tamarind fruit is so versatile and a real treat to our taste buds.

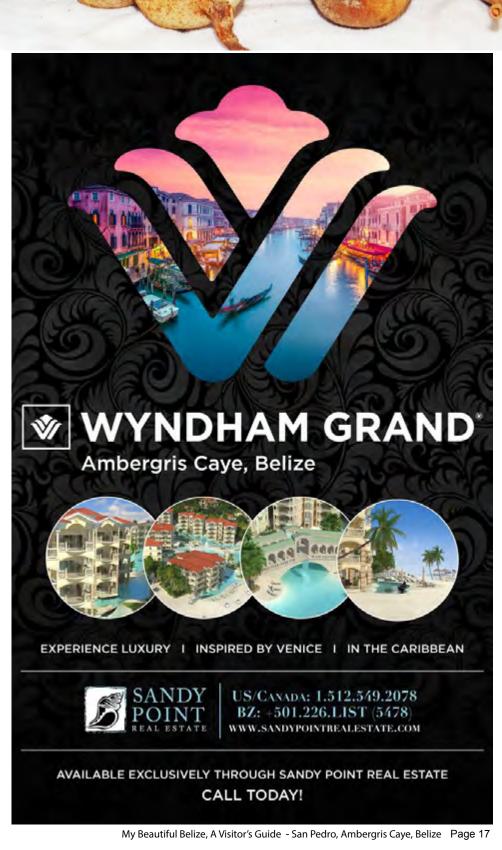
The tamarind fruit grows on the branches of large, shady trees, turning from green to brown. A seasonal event, children often scale the branches to snip off the pods as soon as they start turning, hoping for some delicious treats. Inside the crackly shells, pulp-coated seeds await extraction. The most popular use - at least in my house growing up - was to soak the pulpy goodness overnight in water, then straining and squeezing. After adding sugar, we'd be drinking a deliciously unique, tart and refreshing juice.

Another common treat, especially for children, is the tamarind candy. After removing the seeds, the pulp is rolled in sugar and formed into balls. The crunchy sugar crystals meld with the tart fruit paste, an irresistible treat that even adults indulge in. Finding them at the corner shops selling homemade is an instant throwback to childhood.

Catapulting the tamarind into an adult-style beverage is that delicious mix of tequila and triple sec. Yes, we've even managed to find a way to booze it up — mix some tequila, unsweetened tamarind juice, triple sec and a splash of simple syrup, a dash of lime juice and shake it up. Pour into salt rimmed glass filled with ice and you have yourself a fantastic, exotic tamarind margarita.



Don't want to make it yourself? You can always get one at Crocs Sunset Sports Bar (where we took this shot!)



Conservation Tidbits around Belize

Manatee Man Jamal Galves receives NatGeo Photo Ark EDGE Fellowship



Manatee advocate Jamal Galves, AKA Manatee Man was one of five Latin American conservationists to receive the National Geographic Photo Ark EDGE Fellowship this year. The Fellowship is designed to support on-the-ground conservation efforts to help save species featured in the National Geographic Photo Ark. Jamal won his fellowship for his work with the Antillean Manatee (IUCN Red List: Endangered).

From mid-January to mid-February, Jamal and the other Fellows attended a four-week "Conservation Tools" training course in Costa Rica and in June he was invited to attend the 12th Annual National Geographic Explorers Festival and Symposium in Washington D.C., where the Fellows sat with National Geographic photographer Joel Sartore to discuss their conservation efforts in a panel discussion titled, "Every Animal Deserves a Story". Jamal commented that one of their greatest challenges is delivering scientific information in an understandable way so that the public understands and embraces the issue at hand. Using photos and good messaging can motivate them to care.

Congratulations Jamal, and thank you for your incredible efforts!

Scarlet Macaw chicks rescued and thriving

The two scarlet macaw chicks that were rescued from poachers in the Chiquibul rainforest on June 6th are making a remarkable recovery. Foster parents are feeding the baby birds, ensuring their weight gain and proper development.

Protected by the Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD) rangers, scarlet macaws (and



their chicks) are poached from the forest and sold for approximately 1,000 Quetzales (approximately BZ\$300) in the illegal pet trade at border villages such as La Rejoya. FCD has been actively working with Guatemalan counterparts over the last three years with the aim of combating this illegal wildlife trafficking that is posing a threat to the rare population of scarlet macaws.

If you want to volunteer to watch over the Scarlet Macaw nests, you can do so by emailing bzwildlifeclinic@gmail.com to learn how you can do your part to protect some of Belize's most valuable wildlife!

Hooray for our Mangroves!



On June 15, 2018, the Belize government signed the Forests (Protection of Mangroves) Regulations 2018, which came into effect on June 23, 2018. The new Mangroves Regulations place greater emphasis on the management and conservation of mangroves in critical areas on the mainland and on the cayes of Belize. They also recognize the significance of mangroves as an important feature of our coastline and cayes - the role they play in coastline protection, contribution to our economy, and their aesthetic, ecological and environmental values and functions - and incorporate these intrinsic values to inform the decision-making process for alteration requests. The new Regulations also provide for an improved application process for alteration permits, institute a new systematic fee system, and strengthen penalties and fines to deter illegal mangrove alteration.

This is yet another amazing step forward in the protection of our environmental future. Kudos Belize!

The Belize Barrier Reef is officially off the 'In-Danger' list



After nine years of being 'in-danger' listed, the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System (BBRRS) was removed from the UNESCO World Heritage Center list of 'World Heritage Sites in Danger' on Tuesday, June 26th. The World Heritage Committee (WHC) made the decision official during their 42nd annual meeting in Manama, Bahrain. While that news is welcome, we continue to ask for more positive action to keep our reef healthy!

Stakeholders call on the entire Belizean community to clean up waterways, to protect their mangroves, their shorelines, to pick up garbage, to keep pushing the ban on single-use plastics, to speak up for the marine life, to fight for the continued protection of one of Belize's largest income generators, and biggest tourism attraction.



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Where in Belize

M 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!



Where do you read My Beautiful Belize?

also send us your images of mystery locations to add to our guessing

game! Send them to hello@mybeautifulbelize.com and join the fun!



The Estephan family traveled to watch their beloved Argentina win against Nigeria in the first round of the World Cup being held in Russia. Michael and Svetlana and their sons Nikolai and Michael Jr. sure brought them Belize luck as they won that match. Of course, they had their copy of My Beautiful Belize

*****Waterfront Dining Romantic setting. Friendly staff. New Owner & Menu.



Please RSVP: +501-226-4047 5pm-10pm Wed-Mon 2 miles N of San Pedro Bridge along with them, and shared this great family shot before they made their way inside the Saint Petersburg Stadium. While Argentina's road to the world cup has ended, the Estephan family continues their fabulous summer in Europe! Can't wait to see where else My Beautiful Belize ends up!

Have a copy of My Beautiful Belize? Take a cool snapshot somewhere awesome and send it to us via:

hello@mybeautifulbelize.com

What's happening in July & August?

Carmen, Cayo District

July 21st: Belize Tourism Board Taste Benque Fiesta at Cancha Marshal- of Belize culinary competition at the leck Stadium at Benque Viejo Del Ramada Princess Casino in Belize



August 2nd- 4th: International Costa Maya Festival at the Hon. Slyvestre Sporting Complex in San



10th Annual Tres Pescados Slam Tournament in San Pedro Town.

August 11th: Fidus Pro Dog Show at the Agricultural Show Grounds in Belmopan City

August 17th-19th: Seine Bight Day: A weekend of festivities honoring the Garifuna Culture! Seine Bight Village, Stann Creek District.

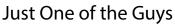
August 10th - 11th: 5th Annual Yellow Ginger Festival celebrated under the theme "Celebrating Our Culture - Embracing our Food".



10th: A Culture Explosion Night will display dances, practices and beliefs of the East Indian Culture at the Parish Hall in Punta Gorda

Town beginning at 6:30PM. 11th: Starting at 10AM at the Central Park, a variety of activities will take place, such as coconut husking, coconut grating, masala making, Takari eating contest, and much more to showcase the vibrant East Indian Culture.

Wolfe's Woofers



When Andrew and I walked into the noisy, crowded Belize City bar things got very quiet. The Happy Hour partiers stopped drinking and stared at him.

"What's wrong with these people?" he asked me. "Haven't they ever seen a vicar?"

Andrew is a vicar of the Presbyterian church back in the U.S. He never goes anywhere without wearing his clerical collar.

"They probably think you're a priest," I told him. "They'll get used to it."

Sure enough, as we talked the crowd went back to partying and drinking. Every once in a while, the lights would flicker out and then the crowd would cheer loudly. When a waiter came over Andrew asked, "Hey, where is the bathroom?"

The waiter said, "It's at the end of that far wall but I need to warn you, Reverend. There is a life-sized statue of a naked woman in the Men's room. She does

have a fig leaf over her private parts but I felt I should warn vou."

"I'm fine with it," Andrew said.

A few minutes later the lights flickered out and as Andrew walked back to our table the crowd clapped and cheered for him. After he sat down he called the waiter over.

"Why did they all applaud because I went to the toilet?" he asked.

"They applauded because now they know you're one of us. Your next drink is on the house."

"I don't understand."

"The fig leaf on the statue is attached to a switch. When the fig leaf is lifted, the lights go out."

Sudoku Answers

Puzzle on Page 9

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



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For more information: