

From the Editor Tamara Sniffin

There is no doubt that Belize has a lot going on! Our 8,867 square miles are jam-packed with fun and adventure, from extreme experienc-

es to lazy days on the beach and everything in between! Our June issue of *My Beautiful Belize* is a good example of how diverse our country is. We have entertaining articles about conquering the fear of caves while learning to love them, celebrating the culture of corn, championing local efforts to restore coral growth on our beloved Belize Barrier Reef, dining and relaxing, and finding that perfect souvenir to name a few. We hope while you discover the many things that are unique and wonderful about our tiny powerhouse of a country you feel the warm welcome of My Beautiful Belize!



About the Front Page: Photographed by his uncle Jorge Cunil Acosta, little *Abrey 'Tinka' Phillip* is enjoying the delicious mango harvest from his backyard in Xaibe Village, Corozal. Mango season is officially here to fill our tummies with juicy goodness!

Wolfe's Woofers Jumping the Line

"No one in this country sells ordinary table lamps," Sherry said. "There's a new department store in Belize City that's having a grand opening tomorrow. By Dennis Wo They show lamps in their advertisement and I want two of them."



I caught a seven o'clock flight to try to beat the crowds to the grand opening. And there was a crowd. Forty people, mostly women, were in line in front of me by eight waiting for the doors to open.

A young lady walked up to another standing ten spaces back from the front of the line.

"Keisha," she said. "I'm just going to stand here with you."

"Oh, no you're not," someone said.

"Nobody jump the line here," someone else said.

The young lady got the message and went to the back of the line near me.

A well-dressed man in his forties strolled to the head of the line and stepped in front of it.

"No, you don't," said the lady at the front. "No line jumping."

"It's all right," the man said. "I'm just going to. . . ."

"No line jumping!"

Someone grabbed his arm and pulled on him and someone else shoved him. He stumbled back to the end of the line. With a determined look on his face he set off to the front again.

"No line jumping!" people screamed.

This time someone punched him in the face as they drove him back to the end of the line. Blood trickled from a cut on his eyebrow. "Are you all right?" I asked.

"I'm O.K." he said, "but if they hit me like that again I'm not going to open the store."



Cave Exploration: It's okay to be afraid of the dark, of damp, cavernous spaces. But it's really COOL if you face those fears and power through those encloses spaces - caves - one at a time! P. 3

Shopping Belize: From jewelry to prepared hot sauces, rums, chocolates, paintings, carvings, wooden decor and more, there's a lot that you can pack in your suitcase to take home and remember Belize by! P. 11

Planting Corals: Stakeholders have made it their mission to continue the good works of coral restoration on Ambergris Caye's coastlines. Under the guidance of experts, and while teaching the younger generations, the San Pedro Tour Operators Association is doing its part to help re-grow our reef. Find out how to help! P. 12

The staple corn: Our ancestors, the Maya, revered this grain. We now enjoy it in all manner of ways, feasting on its deliciousness P. 14 **Aji Escape:** Lunch or breakfast with a view - followed by a dip in the pool? Yes please! P. 15

Where in Belize?

This view is of the road from Georgeville to Mountain Pine Ridge, right before the entrance to Barton Creek in the Cayo District



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!

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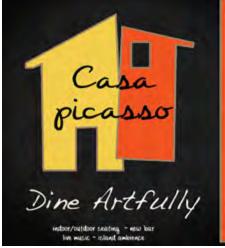




It's not an exaggeration to say that Belize is beautiful, inside and out! For decades I've done my best to explore and experience the stunning landscapes of my country, from misty mountain tops to blue lagoons, jungle forests, and savannah scenery. My ventures have also found me submerged within the underwater world of our crystal-clear Caribbean Sea, discovering coral reef majesty teeming with colorful marine inhabitants and vibrant seascapes. I want to say I've done it all, but there's one astounding geological feature of Belize that is revered by many and feared by others... and I fall under the 'fear' category because to me, caves are just dark, deep, creepy and downright frightening! Sure, I've done a couple of the requisite cave-tubing adventures where we float through a dark chasm on inner tubes, donning headlamps and waterproof flashlights, but I managed to calm my nerves by likening the journey to a scary amusement park ride that will be over soon! Never did I linger and embrace the darkness.

Belize is blessed with the most extensive cave systems in Central America. Throughout these systems run a myriad of rivers, streams, and creeks, making easy access via rafting, trekking, swimming, inner tubing, kayaking, and canoeing. Throughout the years, many brave souls have explored and mapped these countless caves, only to discover that man has long ventured into these subterranean caverns. Centuries ago, armed with nothing more than burning torches, the ancient Maya journeyed deep within the bowels of Mother Earth where they believed caves were conduits to the underground world of the gods, known as Xibalba or "place of fear." Here they worshipped, sometimes sacrificing human life during ceremonial rituals, or called upon deities to bless them with a bountiful harvest, fertility, safety or other appeals. Today, their artifacts can still be found (and







preserved) in the timeless darkness of these passageways and cathedral-sized chambers, a testament to their rich heritage.

It is this amazing archeological discovery of ancient relics and fossilized remains, paired with mind-boggling geological formations that found me overcoming my fear and exploring a handful of caves this year, becoming braver after each encounter with THE DARK and slowly evolving into someone who now loves caves. We don't always have the luxury of breaking ourselves in slowly when it comes to this dark exploration, like starting with spelunking 'lite' to full-on Indiana Jones. But again, sometimes it's better to be thrown into a super scary environment where you must GET OVER the fear NOW, like when my first real experience was descending into the stunning Xibalba Cave within the Dr. Elijio Panti National Park in the Cayo District. It was either sink or swim for this claustrophobic nyctophobian, and the feeling of accomplishment when I not only overcame my fear but started to enjoy myself was as amazing as discovering the mystery and beauty within the dark wonderworld.

Continued on Page 4

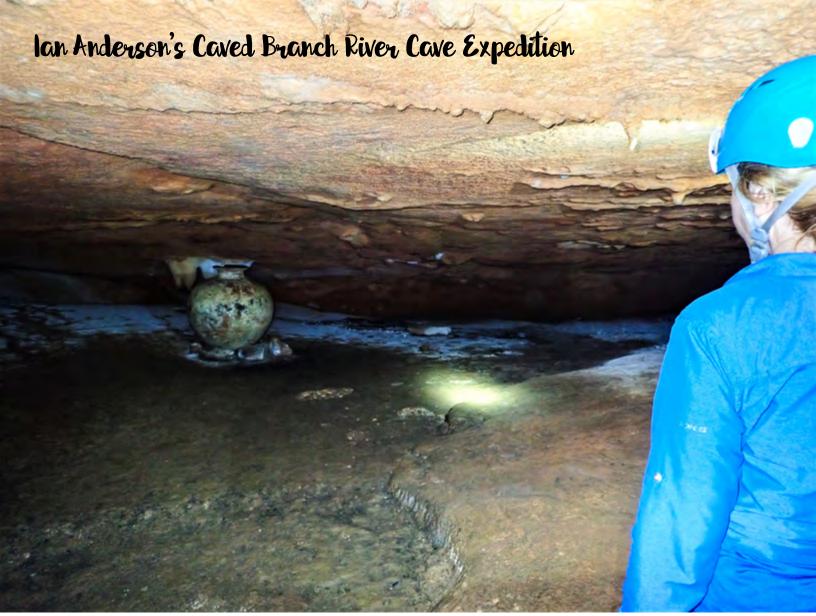


of claustrophobia. With stalactites descending from above, a sandy 'beach' along the river and water cascading as it exits, this cave (or more like a natural tunnel) is picturesque and peaceful. No tour guide or company required for this experience.









(on my scary meter – 3 out of 5 – more than three and a half hours inside a cave can be a little unnerving if you're afraid of the dark)

This adventure starts with inner tubing along a slow river 100 feet to the entrance of the cave system. Once inside, you go through a series of tubing and portage where you traverse pathways from wa-

terway to waterway. Along the way, you are surrounded by sparkling stalactites and stalagmites, spectacular forms of columns, puffy looking formations and curtain-like cascades of folded rock. Above, the ceiling reaches impressive heights where bats have hollowed nesting holes within the stone and can be seen hanging down. Here you learn about the history of the cave and the Maya world while your professional guide points out ancient ceremonial centers, pottery, artifacts, altars, obsidian bloodletting blades, jade and the actual footprints of the Shaman and priests that date back to 400 A.D. Believed that the Maya appealed to their god of fertility here, stalagmites have been sculpted to cast shadows depicting a pregnant woman flanked by a male suitor, and another effigy protruding from the stone wall portrays of a deity only noticeable when illuminated.

It's a day sure to be full of firsts. How many times have you indulged in an underground riverside picnic? Complete with a picnic blanket, tortillas with cold cuts, juice, and fresh fruits and vegetables, eating under the light of your headlamp, this is a most unique experience!

A three-and-a-half-hour expedition, it is rated "three out of five sweat drops" requiring moderate exertion that includes extensive underground hiking and climbing throughout the cave in addition to cave tubing.

Ian Anderson's Cave Branch Adventure Company and Jungle Lodge on Humming-bird Highway in the Cayo District offers a wide variety of caving experiences, from moderate to extreme. Tours can be booked directly through their website at https://www.cavesbranch.com/belize-cave-tours.

As a rule of thumb, caving attire and gear should include lightweight walking shorts that can get wet, well-treaded sneakers or enclosed hiking sandals or boots, bug repellent and a water bottle. Guided tours usually provide any gear necessary such as headlamps, flashlights, life jackets etc.





ΕΔΤ



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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 sunset views and all the

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



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backyard games, or cool off with a sundae from our ice cream shop.



 Belizean Comfort Foods and Gourmet Seafood.
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A J I T A P A B A R RESTAURANT: Beachfront dining in a romantic setting. One of a kind 5-Star Tapa Bar and Restaurant situated

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PORTOFINO RESTAURANT - Fniov our Furo-Caribbean

 Enjoy our Euro-Caribbean inspired menu and spectacular Caribbean views. Also offering a full VEGETARIAN Menu. For

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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.

PLAY



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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.

SHOP M A

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SuDoku Time! Answers on Page 9

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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 206-2121/280-2626 See map for our location!





CALIENTE: On the beach at Sprindrift, Caliente Restaurant serves delicious Caribbean and Mexican cuisine. Try our Jalisco chicken, or our awesome ceviche and don't skip the fabulous margaritas including our specially priced *MAMARITAS!* Indoor

and outdoor dining available. Locally owned/family run. 226-2170.



SANDBAR: BEST PIZZAS ON THE ISLAND! Sandbar hosts an amazing happy hour special: \$10BZD woodfired 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,

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IGUANA JUAN'S: Thoughtful burgers, killer vegetarian, creative cocktails and more, served with an eclectic vibe overlooking Back Street! Specializing in American and Central American dishes. We're

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MELT - NEW LOCATION over the water in town at the Tackle Box Pier!! Live music & karaoke every night. 7AM – midnight; food served till 10PM. Specializing in MELT-y grilled cheese sandwiches - tons of delicious variety. Visit us!

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!

TRANSPORTATION

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

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

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

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

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Reef Dr.

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



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

Belize. www.12belize.com 670-5272.



HAVANA CIGARS BELIZE: Our walk-in humidor stocks an ever changing selection of some of the finest handmade 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

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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.



KIDTOPIA: Located on the second floor of Sancas Realty Plaza (Unit #13) on Coconut Drive, downtown San Pedro, Kidtopia is a kids club/drop-off center for children between

the ages of four to fourteen. Open Tuesdays-Saturdays from 10AM-7PM, and on Sundays from 12PM-5PM.

GEORGIE'S CRUST & CRUMBS: located inside "The Gallery" of San Pedro. The best Gourmet Pies from the "Pie Queen" with First Class Fresh "The Galler Ingredients alongside The Largest Collection of Paintings in Belize. 2 1/2 blocks North of the Roundabout. Pies: 615-9327 Art: 226-4304.



XSITE BELIZE SAILING AND

ADVENTURES: Come sail on our live aboard catamaran. For more information on Day Sailing Trips, One Night Sailing w/Camping & Fishing and Multiple Day

Sudoku Answers Puzzle on Page 7



LA SIRENE RESORT, Spa and Luxury Hotel is located at the southern tip of the island. Currently in the development phase, La Sirene's model home located on Coconut Drive is open to the public. Open from Monday to Saturday from 9Am to 5PM. For more information visit www.lasirene.bz

LaSIRENE

My Beautiful Belize, A Visitor's Guide - San Pedro, Ambergris Caye, Belize Page 9



EATS & TREATS



casa Picasso Restaurant: Tapas dining in an artful setting. Live music nightly. Global flavors featuring local ingredients...martinis, wines, cocktails. Vegetarian & gluten-free options. Open Tuesday-Sunday at 5pm, last reservation at 9pm. 226-4443 or reservations@casapi-

cassobelize.com. On Coconut Drive across from the upcoming Marriott Residences. Find us on Facebook or casapicassobelize.com.

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.



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El DIVINO CARIBBEAN STEAKHOUSE & MARTINI BAR: Banana



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

BLACK ORCHID RESTAURANT & LOUNGE:

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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



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Lake Villas is your quaint, Edenic and relaxing hang-out joint. Tuesdays to Sundays (Bar 11am-11pm, Restaurant 7am). Live Music and Ladies Night on Fridays; Karaoke on Saturdays, with Food and Drink Specials, every day. Contact us at southstationsanpedrobelize@gmail.com

or 601-2858.

Made in Belize: Sowenirs for a lasting memory!

Janelle Cowo

Traveling has become second nature to me - I am fascinated with going to new places and learning about new cultures. With each new place I visit, a lifetime memory is created, and I try to hallmark it by bringing back that perfect souvenir which will forever remind me of those days away from home. However, souvenir shopping isn't always easy – deciding which tangible vacation memory to take home can be a challenge. I focus on two words: authentic and unique, and try to bring a souvenir that fits that definition. Even when traveling within my home country, I always want something 'Made in Belize.'

Our little Caribbean jewel offers so many different travel experiences for both domestic and international travelers. From becoming one with nature in the Mountain Pine Ridge Mountains to being welcomed in the home of the Maya of southern Belize, or simply relaxing on a beach on one of her many cayes – Belize can be anyone's dream destination.

Souvenirs from my travels across Belize range from earrings to pepper sauces; after the sauce has been happily consumed, the bottle remains! So, what proudly made in Belize items can you take back home? Here are some of my top souvenir purchases:

1. A taste of Belize - At the top of the list, just short of her people, is the food and drinks of Belize that make her so irresistible. Each region of Belize has a flavor unique to its location and I often find myself stocking up on my last travel day. Cashew wine brewed in Crooked Tree Village, handcrafted chocolate confections from Ixcacao Maya Belize Chocolate in the Toledo District. Naturally, the ubiquitous Belizean Marie Sharp hot pepper sauces can be found at most souvenir shops and rums from Traveller's Liquors have been some of my most tasty travel purchases.





Belizean jewelry – A girls go-to purchase! I don't think I have ever returned from vacation without at least one piece of jewelry. Artisanal accessories are a great remembrance of a special destination you have visited, one you can use again and again. The Maya women of southern Belize create some of the most beautiful hand knitted purses and headbands. But my all-time favorite piece of jewelry must be those created not only for beauty but to save the environment. Lionfish earring are the new rave! Stunningly beautiful to wear and each purchase helps to fight an invasive species that threaten the Belize Barrier Reef System.

3. Artfully Belizean – Local arts is always a great buy. Belize has so many talented painters who showcase the beauty of the country through colors on a canvas. Local art galleries are full of Belizean masterpieces ready to brighten up any living space. From majestic Maya temples, lush flora and fauna and the glorious Caribbean sunsets, these paintings will remind you of your adventure in Belize for years to come. Belizean art also comes in the form of carvings made from wood, shells, and even stone. Carry a piece of Belize with you back home, to remind you of the glorious days spent in her embrace.

These are just a few of Belize's great souvenir offerings. Don't be shy to explore local artisan markets at your vacation destination - buying Belizean-made products not only offers you an authentic souvenir but helps support the local economy. Make your travels everlasting with a little piece of Belize!







Where the road ends on the southern tip of Ambergris Caye



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San Pedro Tour Operators come to rescue the reef

Ask any Belizean what is the one thing we hold near and dear to our hearts... and most will respond, our amazing Belize Barrier Reef! Our beloved reef is a 190 mile-long section of the 560 mile-long Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, and as of 2019, our coral crown is now considered the world's largest reef system as sadly, Australia's Great Barrier Reef is ranked second due to the coral bleaching that has occurred. Elkhorn coral is one of the most important corals in the Caribbean and along with staghorn coral and star corals have formed Caribbean coral reefs over the last 5,000 years. In the early 1980s a bacterial syndrome, known as whiteband disease has now reduced the elkhorn and staghorn population to less than three percent of its former abundance.

On Ambergris Caye, where reef-related tourism is paramount, one group of vested stakeholders have taken the lead in restoring reef areas that have been affected.

According to the president of the San Pedro Tour Operators Association (SPTOA), Everette Anderson, it is essential that the members of the association be part of the solution. "Here on Ambergris Caye, there are many of us who depend on a healthy reef for our livelihood. As tour operators, we can take the initiative to find solutions in restoring our damaged reef, and with the help of local tour guides, vol-

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unteers, and the business sector, we can make a difference. We want to set an example that we, as a private-sector-led conservation organization, can do our part in protecting the dive and snorkel sites we use every day," he explained.

This year the SPTOA initiated a coral restoration project inspired by the Fragments of Hope Coral Restoration Project founded by Lisa Carne, which has seen great success at Laughing Bird Caye in southern Belize. With local marine biologists Miguel Alamilla and Valentine Rosado providing advisory and technical support and University of Belize biology students (and island young ladies) Fara Stephany Maza and Brittney Garbutt coordinating the project, steps are underway to grow and replant elkhorn and staghorn coral. Under the tutelage of Carne, and guidance from Alamilla and Rosado, the young biologists took several trips to the reef to setup anchored PVC frames. This first site is located inside of the popular diving and snorkeling area known as Tuffy. According to Rosado, the hope is to bring this snorkel site to the level of Laughing Bird Caye and make it as popular as Hol Chan. "The Placencia project is an inspiration because Laughing Bird Caye looks amazing with high coral cover and marine life and is the direct result of their restoration efforts. We believe we can replicate that success at each of our dive/snorkel sites," he remarked.

Once the frames were installed, healthy fragments of elkhorn and staghorn coral were collected from other areas along the reef. The team then secured the fragments onto tiles that are fastened to the PVC frame. Here the fragments will continue to grow if they take well to the frames. "A lot of effort went into site selection, nursery construction, mother-site selection, monitoring, etc. We anticipate that in about ten months-time, each fragment will grow much larger, allowing us to 'prune them' and take the nursery

fragments to out-plant at our target restoration sites. We hope to begin planting to target restoration sites at the end of this hurricane season," explained Rosado.

To help sustain this important project, the SPTOA has established a Conservation Membership Program to support the work and keep it running long-term. Their short-term target is to hire a Program Manager so their board, members, biologists, and volunteers can be more effective and coordinated. The Program Manager will coordinate all programs under the association, develop and manage their conservation membership program and secure long-term funding for the work. Thanks to amazing organizations like the SPTOA Coral Restoration Project, there is hope that essential elkhorn and staghorn coral will be saved from full-on extinction and will successfully flourish once again. For more information, please contact SPTOA at 600-4856 or e-mail sptouroperator@gmail.com.



Coming from a Mestizo household means that I have eaten a lot - A LOT - of corn! From simple corn tortillas to tamales and tamalitos, we love corn. We even consume it in traditional drinks such as atole and pozole. Not only is corn a staple in the Belizean diet, but its cultural significance is a major source of pride.

Corn - A staple on Belizean Tables!

You see, corn was one of the most valuable agricultural products to the original inhabitants of Belize: the Maya. Their daily lives revolved around the cultivation, trade, and consumption of this vegetable. Corn was so significant to the Maya people that they even had a Maize God to which offerings were given to ensure a bountiful crop. While that tradition is no longer observed, the Belizean populace still places much importance into the growth of corn, particularly for consumption.

As a child, I still recall the sacks upon sacks we had to husk and clean as part of a long process to prepare the corn for our final tasty meal. Once the corn is cleaned of all its leaves, it was time to shuck the kernels off the cob. If we were making tamales or tamalitos, the cooked kernels would need to be ground to make a dough (masa). The grinding process for each particular dish is just a bit different – the dough to make tamales require the dried corn kernels to be boiled before grinding. The dough for tamalitos came from raw young corn kernels. Getting the corn from the farm to the table is a long process, but worth it when it makes for such a tasty

One of my favorite corn treats is esquite – a spicy and savory corn snack also called Street Corn. I consider esquite one of the more obscure street snacks of Belize as it is not easily found for sale countrywide but mostly in the northern districts of Corozal and Orange Walk. If you do get your hands on a cup, your taste buds are in for dance! Of course, you can always make it at home (see recipe at right).

Side Note: We love corn so much we are going to celebrate it with its very own Festival! You read right; for the first time ever, there will be a Corn Festival held in Orange Walk Town. Hosted by the Banquitas House of Culture, the festival will be all things corn. Corn is a versatile crop, and everything on a corn plant is useable. The husk of the corn is traditionally used in the making of tamalitos and most recently

to make corn husk dolls. Corn is even used to make biodegradable food utensils and plates - isn't that great! To be held on Saturday, June 29th at the Banquitas House of Culture on Main Street, Orange Walk Town, the festival will include traditional eats, several competitions, fun games for the kids and live entertainment. Don't miss out on this grand celebration of corn! More updates and information are available at the Corn Festival's social media page www.facebook.com/Banquitas/

ESQUITE Ingredients 2 cups fresh corn kernels, just cut from cob 2 tablespoons unsalted butter ½ teaspoon salt 2 tablespoons mayonnaise or fresh ¼ teaspoon chili powder or Tajin 2 tablespoons queso fresco or cotija cheese, crumbled 1 lime cut into wedges **Directions** Heat the butter in a medium pan. Add the corn kernels and salt. Sauté for another 4 minutes and remove from heat. Let the mixture cool

Top with queso fresco and lime juice (optional). Serve immediately. For More Information on Trips and Overnight Charters: 011-501-610-0226

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slightly and stir the mayonnaise or crema. Move to a serving bowl.

Sprinkle as much of the chili powder on top of the corn as you want.

Calendar of Events: JUNE



June 8th – Mango Fest at Hopkins Village starting at 9AM

June 13th - Estel's Lionfish Fishing Tournament at Estel's Dine by the Sea, San Pedro Town starting at

June 14th -Sandy Brad-

shaw and Friends Concert at the Ramada Princess Hotel and Casino, Belize City starting at 7:30PM



June 15th – Party Like a Lob*Star Live music, DJ's and lobster specials. El Divino at Banana Beach Resort, Coconut Drive San Pedro starting at 3PM

June 16th – Lobster Crawl Beach Day at Pirate's Not So Secret Beach Bar and Grill, North Ambergris Caye starting at 10AM



June 16th – Father's Day Concert at the Bliss Center for Performing Arts, Belize City starting at 7:30PM

June 17th – Lobster Crawl at Iguana Juan's Restaurant and Bar, San Pedro Town starting at 11AM

 Canucks Lobster Crawl Night at Crazy Canucks Beach Bar, San Pedro Town starting at 6PM

June 21st – Lobster Fest Price is Right at The Trucks Stop, North Ambergris Caye starting at 7PM

- Lobster crawl at Palapa Bar and Grill, San Pedro Town starting at 11AM

June 21st to 23rd – Placencia Lobster Fest at the Placencia Boardwalk, Placencia Peninsula

June 22nd - San Pedro Lobster Fest Block Party at Central Park, San Pedro Town starting at 5PM June 26th - 28th - Belize Archaeology Symposium at the San Ignacio Resort, San Ignacio Town (more info at https://sites.google.com/

site/belizearchaeologysymposium/)

June 28th - 30th - Caye Caulker Lobster Fest at Palapa Gardens, Caye Caulker Village

June 29th – Corn Festival at the Banquitas House of Culture, Orange Walk Town starting at 9AM







June 29th Dia de San Pedro at the Honorable Louis Sylvester Sporting Complex, San Pedro Town starting at 7PM



absolutely romantic layout, with twinkling lights ready to cast their glow on happy couples for dinner, Aji is evolving. They now serve breakfast, weekend lunches and their famous dinners continue to inspire.

Weekends also just got better, as their newly added pool is the perfect coolant on a hot weekend. Have some lunch - indulge in a delicious ceviche, feast on some paella, or taste any of their delectable tapas. Then, cool off in their beautiful pool while sipping on a refreshing drink or two! It's the perfect plan – and no better place than the tranquil haven that is Aji Tapas Bar. During these hot weekends, a little afternoon escape to Aii is just the ticket!

For reservations, call 226-4047. Open every day except Tuesday, they serve breakfast from 8am – 10:30am, dinner from 5pm – 10pm and on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, stop in for a delicious lunch (and poolside fun) from 11:30am – 2pm. Their happy hour runs from 2pm – 5pm, so you can really enjoy a fun afternoon! Located at Buena Vista Resort, two miles north of the bridge, they are just north of Grand Caribe. Follow the signs to a delicious and refreshing retreat!



