

From the Editor: Tamara Sniffin

It seems like there is a lot of traveling going on in this month's issue of My Beautiful Belize. From Peggy, the loggerhead sea turtle on her nesting quest, exploring Corozal in the northern part of Belize, to traditional fisherfolk on their vocational voyage and even navigating Belize real estate, we are all over the map!

Of all the ways to roam, one of my favorites is time travel. As cool as it would be to get into an elaborate machine that would hurl us into the past, our scrapbook mementos get us there. Our "Island celebrations commemorate the growth of our La Isla Bonita!" article reflects on two notable events held yearly that commemorate the growth and development of Ambergris Caye from a small fishing island to a bustling tourism destination. The sleepy days of island life with sandy roads and untouched beaches are now just memories and faded photos, while the endless beauty of Ambergris Caye endures with her Belizean-blue waters and island ambiance shining bright.

Editor Tamara (Temsik) Sniffin (r) and friend Aida say goodbye to island pups before hopping on a Tropic Air flight.

Ambergris Caye, 1983



Many have chronicled the history of Ambergris Caye as far back as when the island was home to over forty thousand Maya. My little piece of island history began more recently, in the mid-70s, when my adventurous parents visited the fishing village of San Pedro. They fell in love with the warm people and vibe of island life and soon made it a second home. Over the last fifty years, we have watched the village grow from a population of 400 to now more than 20,000! Prosperity has benefited islanders and investors in countless ways, capitalizing on accolades as the number one tourism destination in the country.

As you explore Belize, the experiences vary from the bustling Ambergris Caye to the still sleepy beachside communities on the mainland, and there is so much in between! Your curated memories are your ticket to time travel back to Belize until your return visit. We welcome you to My Beautiful Belize!



My name is Wally Nuñez, Mayor of San Pedro Town, and I extend the most heartfelt welcome to the beautiful island of Ambergris Caye.

Our island is your home, and we invite you explore our reefs and natural landscape. We are working every day to enhance the visitor experience and to improve the wellbeing of our communities. We are a proud and resilient people, and we share the beauty of our island with all visitors.

Our greatest priority as a growing community is the safety of all residents. The increase of traffic and service trucks is a conspicuous aspect of our town during peak visitation. We assure all visitors that we are working to improve road safety in a responsible and systematic manner. New and innovative measures are being implemented to alleviate parking spaces and improve the freedom of movement around our island.

We ask all visitors to roam the landscape and be part of our island's prosperity. Our neighborhoods are interconnected better than ever through the gradual expansion of smoother streets. It has created greater opportunities for residents and improved access for all.

Our San Pedro Town Council keeps working to make our island accessible and embracing on each visit. We thank you for the opportunity to be part of your visitor experience and wish you the most memorable and exceptional visit.



The sun shines bright following the total eclipse on April 8th! While in Allen, Texas, USA, witnessing the celestial event, the new umbraphiles Kaitlyn Nelson from Denver, Colorado, and Holly Spitzer from El Paso, Texas, take the time to read *My Beautiful Belize*!

Merlin Kovach from San Pedro Town, Ambergris Caye, Belize, travels with her copy of *My Beautiful Belize* while visiting the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Refuge in Homosassa, Florida, USA.





Lara and Cindy surprised the Belize Chocolate Company team, Chris, Jo, and son Noah, while they showcased their fine products at the Paris, France, annual Salon Du Chocolat extravaganza. Despite the tasty temptations, the business entrepreneurs, all from Ambergris Caye, Belize, still found time to read My Beautiful Belize! (L-R) Chris Beaumont, Cindy Vigna, Lara Goldman, Jo Sayer and Noah.

Have a great picture reading this publication? Send it to us at hello@mybeautifulbelize.com to be featured!



Fishing in Belize is more than a profession; it is also a tradition that has been maintained and practiced for generations. As a vital livelihood, those depending on it are also aware of the importance of protecting this vulnerable industry from abuse and overfishing. Among the hundreds of fishing spots along the Belizean Caribbean coastline, there is a particular area used by a dedicated family from Sarteneja Village in northern Belize. The Lopez family fish and look after a fishing area around Middle Long Caye, rich in fisheries stock and a mangrove haven southeast of Belize City.

The third-generation family of fishermen is headed by Ismael Lopez Sr., followed by Ismael Lopez Jr. and now his son Rodrigo Lopez. The fishing family is also very active with the Belize Federation of Fishers (BFF), a non-profit organization of fishermen working with commercial fishermen. We visited Lopez's fishing camp on Middle Long Caye with the BFF's assistance. The Lopez crew were happy to welcome us to their camp, where they spend most of their time making a living.

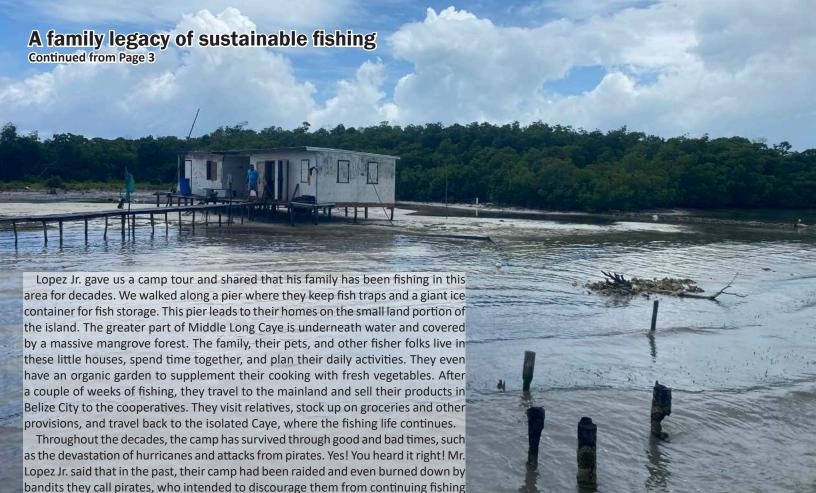
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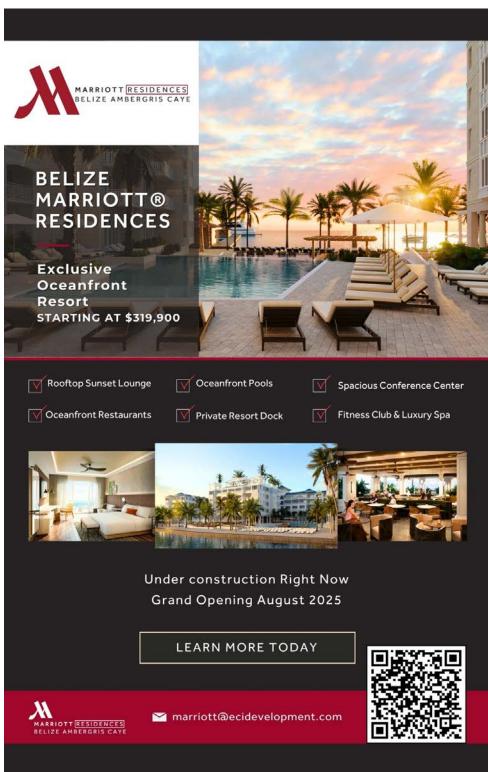


An example of sustainable fishing practices

Besides all the sacrifices the Lopez family has made, what makes this fishing camp remarkable is how they have managed to strike a balance between conservation and extraction. Contrary to other fishing sites along the Belizean coast, where fisheries stock is declining, at Middle Long Caye, the Lopez folks say they maintain these resources. According to Lopez Sr., there is not much difference in the number of marine species, such as lobster, conch, and certain types of fish, compared to 25 years ago. Rodrigo told us they take good care of their fishing grounds and only take what they need.

Another type of fishing they practice is via sailboats. We went out to see one of these boats, and they explained that up to six fishermen travel in these vessels, where they live and work for days. They have an ample supply of ice, keeping their catch fresh. The Lopez family was happy to share with us the life of a fisherman but also indicated that they face other threats. One of these is extending marine protected areas near Middle Long Caye. These will shrink their fishing space. The Lopez fisherfolks see the importance of the government's help, but they believe that what they have been doing for the past years is preserving the local marine resources. They are open to working with the respective conservation authorities and encourage other fisherfolks nationwide to be responsible and fish responsibly. The Lopez way has worked so far, as they continue reaping the benefits of a well-managed fishing practice.







"Let's go to Secret Beach!" A response of "yes" often follows. After all, who wouldn't want to spend a day soaking up the sun at one of the island's top beaches? Secret Beach, located 6.5 miles north of San Pedro Town on Ambergris Caye, has become a popular destination for locals and visitors. The hour-long drive via golf cart from San Pedro Town is a memorable part of your day at the beach. And there's no better place to enjoy the island time vibes than at Maruba Beach Klub, located at the entrance of Secret Beach.

Maruba Beach Klub is a favorite spot for many, offering cool vibes, fantastic food, and some of the best cocktails. But perhaps the best part of it all is the crystal-clear water, perfect for a day of endless beach fun.

To find Maruba Beach Klub, look for the letter "M," their signature symbol. When you arrive, one of their attentive servers will guide you to the beach paradise. With an emphasis on relaxation, Maruba provides various seating options, including comfortable sofa loungers, table

Continued on Page 8









Maruba Beach Klub

Continued from Page 7

seating, and plenty of beach chairs and in-water tables. Once you've settled in, it's time to indulge your taste buds and quench your thirst!

If you arrive early, don't worry; Maruba serves a full breakfast menu all day! Their stuffed fry jacks are a crispy and filling delight. Pair them with their signature deluxe Bloody Mary, which comes with a delicious bacon and blackened shrimp skewer, and you have the perfect breakfast or brunch combo.

Be sure to try their Maruba Punch or Champagne Sorbet served with a split of Freixenet and fresh frozen sorbet. Their Aperol spritz is also a refreshing treat. You can also ask for your drinks to be OVER-sized, which is excellent for two or more friends to enjoy.









For lunch, the menu offers classic dishes like a juicy burger, or you can opt for healthier options and enjoy one of their vegan dishes. The shrimp spring rolls are a favorite, offering a light and fresh hite

And with another cocktail in hand, enjoy the shallow water as you bury your toes in the sand with no worry in the world.



Are you looking for an extra treat? Why not rent a private boat and quickly tour Secret Beach? Just ask your servers, and they will make the arrangements. Cruise with drinks in hand and enjoy all the beautiful scenery that Ambergris Caye offers!

Maruba also offers a full-service spa overlooking the stunning Caribbean seascape for those seeking relaxation. Treat yourself to a deep tissue, Swedish, Aroma, Maruba Mood Mud massage, or even a Maruba Molasses scrub to refresh your soul, body, and mind.

Maruba Beach Klub is open daily from 9 AM until 5 PM. They can arrange transport via land or boat if you prefer not to drive there via golf cart. Maruba also caters to birthday parties and large group events, but reservations are recommended. You can find them on Facebook @marubabeachklub or call 610-3779.



Article Submitted by: Jamal Andrewin-Bohn Conservation Program Manager, The Belize Zoo & Tropical Education Center

Nestled in the lowland savanna of the Maya Forest Corridor is a wonderful lodge called the Tropical Education Center (TEC). Popularly known as the "Zoo Lodge," the TEC is the sister site to the world-famous Belize Zoo and was added in 1991 to promote immersive exploration and appreciation of the natural world.

Conveniently located 30 minutes from the Philip Goldson International Airport, and roughly halfway between Belmopan and Belize City, the TEC is often the first or last stop for travelers on their journeys in Belize.





Guests at the TEC are diverse; student groups, researchers, training, or staff retreat participants, solo travelers, campers, and families are among many that enjoy their stay with us.

Shared dormitories, private cabañas, air-conditioned cabin rooms, and family-sized guests houses enable the TEC to accommodate up to 78 guests



The Tropical Education Center

Continued from Page 9

at any given time and reflects the diverse backgrounds (and budgets) of our lodgers.

A dining hall, library, air-conditioned conference room, and birding deck make up TEC's main building, which is the central communal space for the property. When looking to unwind after a day of adventure, the nearby, screened-in swimming pool at the TEC allows guests to relax, socialize, and cool off.

A little further afield, guests can spend their time exploring the extensive trail system on the 84-acre property, which takes them through mixed habitat types, and allows them to share space with the wonderful wildlife of Belize. Over 300 species of birds have been recorded at the TEC, as well as multiple sightings of agoutis, pacas, snakes, iguanas, jaguarundis, tamandua, and even the national animal of Belize: the tapir!

While most guests tend to arrange their own off-site excursions when using TEC as "home base," we offer a couple unique and local tours. A half day canoe trip down the Sibun River is a mildly challenging and very rewarding experience for more adventurous guests.

One of the biggest draws to stay at the TEC, as well, is the exciting prospect of doing the "Belize Zoo at Night". Seeing the Belize Zoo after hours in the company of a knowledgeable zookeeper is a wholly different experience than during the day, particularly as many of the wildlife in the Neotropics tend to be more active after sunset.

To learn more about the Tropical Education Center visit www.belizezoo.org. You can also get in touch with us at tecreservations@belizezoo.org, or +501-613-1832.

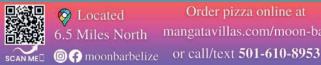








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Maruba Beach Klub - Shhhh... Tell everyone not to tell anyone about Secret Beach. Open daily, 9AM - 5PM; Tel: +501-610-3779. E-mail: marubasecretbeach@gmail.com



Happy Island Beach Bar & Grill - Secret Beach's only two-time winner for Lobster Fest 2023! Locally owned and operated, offering a casual upbeat atmosphere, the finest cocktails, and a tasty menu... try our ceviche! Open 9AM to 6PM daily with live music on Sundays. Facebook @ Happy Island Beach Bar and Grill



The Winey Gringa - One-stop shop for all your grocery needs! Fresh produce, dairy products, meats, snacks, beer, wine and more! We deliver!! Order online at thewineygringa.com. Open 7AM-7PM.



Moon Bar at Mangata Villas - Your ultimate beach bar destination! Adults-only (18+), strong drinks, gourmet pizza, and excellent service! Relax on the beach in complimentary lounge chairs and hammocks. Free use of kayaks, SUPs, and swimming pool. Golf cart drive-in movie every Friday. Open daily 12PM to 9PM at Mangata

Villas. 501-610-8953.

Important Information

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.

ACES Wildlife Rescue: Don't take matters into your own hands. Call 623-7920 for wildlife conflicts and rescue.

Al-Anon Meetings: Wednesdays, 5:30PM, SP Catholic Church Hall islabonitaalanon@yahoo.com

Ambergris Caye Masonic Lodge: ambergriscayemasoniclodge@gmail.com 672-2265

Belize Hotel Association: 223-0669, bha@btl.net

Belize Tourism Board: 227-2419

Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA): 227-5717 Dr. Otto Rodriguez San Pedro Poly-Clinic II: 226-2536

Emergency Veterinarian care: 610-3647

Hope Haven: 226-2333

Island Emergency Services: Certified medical emergency service. Call 615-2998

Narcotics Anonymous: By request at 623-0316.

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

Rotary Club of Ambergris Caye: Join Rotary at our weekly meetings Wednesdays

at noon at THE FACTORY. Find us on Facebook!

RRR Response: Emergency response team Call 627-1117

Saga Society: A non-profit "humane society" to address the stray cat and dog

population in San Pedro. Phone 226-3266. San Pedro Police Department: 206-2022 San Pedro Tourist Guide Association: 226-2391

SP Post Office: 206-2260. SP Town Library: 206-2028



Caliente - An island favorite, family-owned and operated restaurant on the lagoon in the center of San Pedro, serving a delicious combination of Mexican and Caribbean cuisine, open Tuesday through Sunday from 11 am - 9:30 pm; TEL: 501-226-2170



Elvi's Kitchen – The most famous kitchen in San Pedro! This award-winning restaurant serves Belizean, International, Mexican, Caribbean and seafood cuisine with vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options. Mayan Buffett on Fridays (seasonally) Open Monday – Saturday, 11am – 9:30pm.

Phone:+501 226-2404 +501 226-2176. E-mails: reservations@elviskitchen.com | info@elviskitchen.com



Gaby's Place - Discover the best in fashion and accessories at our clothing store on Pescador Drive! explore an array of selection of clothing, perfumes, purses, jewelry, and more. Call 6106562 or visit us today! Follow us on insta/ fb for more info.



KayDan's - Indulge in savory seafood ceviches, delectable snacks, and refreshing beverages at KayDan's Ceviche and Snacks. Enjoy daily specials from 11 am until closing. Visit us on Tarpon Street or call 6335162 for pick-up orders.

Paradice Cream - Paradice Cream Parlor offers its customers a variety of over 30 flavors of homemade ice cream. Open Daily, 11am - 9:30pm; TEL: 501-226-5959





12 Belize - 12 Belize is a lifestyle boutique featuring Belizean-made products. The line of products changes as new artisans are discovered. Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 10AM to 1PM. Closed Wednesdays and weekends. TEL: 501-670-5272



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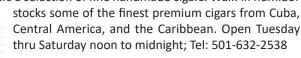
to Hotel, Airport or Boat within town limits. 226-2938, Pescador Drive. Facebook: Graniels Dreamland



CIGARS

Tiburon Rum - Tiburon rum is a hand-crafted, aged, premium rum. Our family-owned distillery is near the shores of the Caribbean Sea in Belize. Visit our tasting room in San Pedro! Web: http://WWW.TIBURONRUM.COM/. E-mail:

basil@sharkbaitco.comNestled in the heart of San Pedro Town, Havana Cigars Bar offers a selection of fine handmade cigars. Walk-in humidor



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Toucan Iggy's - Dive into flavor at Toucan Iggy! Shaved ice, mouthwatering waffles with chicken, refreshing smoothies, and The Famous Nick

McMuffin Sandwich available 7am-10am. New specials weekly! Spindrift Hotel on Front Street. Toucan Iggy's Belize @Facebook and Instagram. 7am – 5pm.

El Fogon Restaurant - "The Firehearth," specializing in authentic Belizean cuisine. Our menu consists of a diverse selection of dishes that represent our Belizean culture. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook at @ elfogonbelize. Tel +501-673-2121.







REEL Belize - Discover unparalleled fly-fishing experiences at REEL BELIZE Fly Shop in San Pedro. Open Monday to Saturday. Expert guides, top-notch gear, and breathtaking Belizean water

awaits. www.reelbelize.com Call/WhatsApp: +501-610-5182



SP BTIA Tourism Information Center – Hosted by the Belize Tourism Industry Association San Pedro Chapter, providing information on all things tourism on Ambergris Caye and beyond. On Almond Street, next to the Artisan Market. https://www.facebook.com/spbtiatic/ for hours.



The Cork & Cooperage - The only Wine and Bourbon Bar in San Pedro focusing on premium, current vintage, New World Wines and Spirits. Two locations - Reef Lofts on Coconut Drive and Pescador Drive across from Caramba in center of town. facebook.

com/corkandcooperage



Tacos La Diosa – Not Mexican but our style Queso Fundido, Tacos al Pastor, Carnitas, Margaritas, Palomas and more. Real corn tortillas. Family salsa recipe. The guac is always so extra. Todo con amor! Everything with Love! Come on over and let's TACO about it!

Palapa Bar and Grill - Belize's original over-the-water beach bar. Float in our innertubes, enjoy the sundeck, and savor delicious food and cocktails. Live music daily. Open daily from 10 am - 11 pm; TEL: 501-615-8811





D'family Cafe - D'family Cafe is a family-owned restaurant in the Boca Del Rio Area. We are open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner serving local favorites. Call or Whatsapp us at 626-9636 or 605-9490 or visit our FB page

Cool Beans - Let us be part of your itinerary list when visiting Ambergris Caye, Belize. We are located over the water at the Dream catcher pier, serving breakfast and lunch all day from Monday to Saturday. Don't forget to join us every Wednesday for our famous sushi night. Ph: 620-3810





The High Seas - Be at ease in Belize at The High Seas! An over-the-water bar and grill serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Put your feet up, take a refreshing swim, and enjoy the view while we put a cold drink in your hand.

Nauti Crab - Located at Seven Seas Resort, Boca Del Rio. Open Monday to Saturday, 11:30am-11pm, Sunday 9am (for brunch) - 11pm . WhatsApp/phone: 501-670-8001. nauticrabbelize@gmail.com. Check our Facebook or Instagram for daily activities.





Wayo's Beach Bar - "All Roads Lead to Wayo's-Open 8 Days a Week" 11am to midnight at our over the water location. Nightly events-live music, DJs & games. Cool cocktails, amazing eats & the friendliest crew in Boca, walk in a stranger leave as family-Wayo Not? Tel +501-

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Table Rock Jungle Lodge – An award-winning ecolodge on a 105-acre jungle reserve along the Macal River, offering eco-friendly cabanas and farm-to-table cuisine. Located Mile 5 Cristo Rey Road, San

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The Galleon Building - at the Best Western Grand Baymen Gardens is the 6th building in queue featuring 5-stories, and stunning garden views of the compound. The Galleon building will feature a rooftop bar with stunning 360-degree views of the beautiful island of Ambergris Caye.



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The Island Jungle Restaurant & Bar – A vibrant recently relocated restaurant and bar on Seagrape Drive. Enjoy local cuisine in a relaxed ambiance with friendly staff. Serving breakfast, lunch, dinner, delicious BBQ specials with live music, karaoke, and refreshing cocktails. OPEN DAILY Call 604-6123/626-1669

The Beach Bar @ Caribbean Villas – Full restaurant and bar. Enjoy our beachside location! Serving island favorites and cool libations. Open daily 7am - 10pm. 622-1857

Hidden Treasure – Tucked away on a back street in the Escalante residential neighborhood south of San Pedro Town, discover fine dining in a rustic yet elegant and romantic setting. Specializing in Latin American and #dden Treasure Caribbean Cuisine. Opening Wednesday through Monday from 5pm - 9pm; TEL: 501-226-4111



The Palmilla Restaurant at Victoria House - Romantic VICTORIA HOUSE and comfortable ambiance, serving a unique mix of island seafood and continental cuisine. Admiral Nelson Bar is

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Black Orchid Restaurant and Lounge - Serving outstanding meals, offering private dining booths and cocktails. Open Tuesday through Saturday, Happy hour & appetizers 3 – 5pm Dinner 5:30pm – 9pm TEL: 501-206-2441

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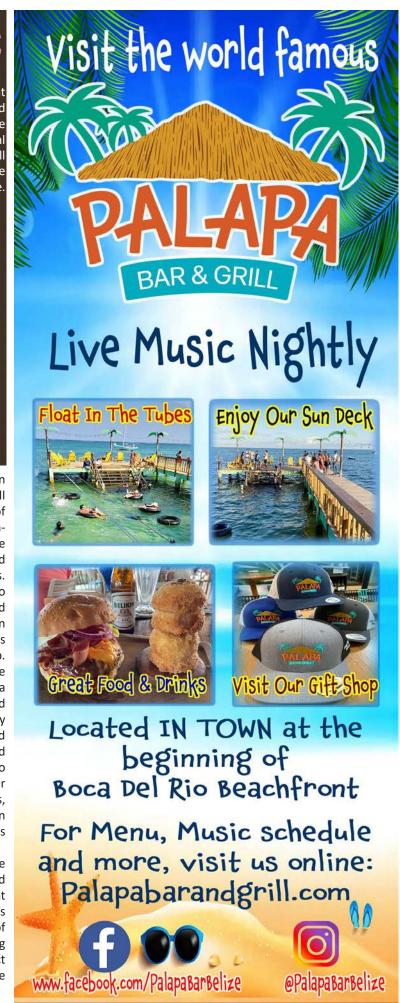




Belize has a long history of cacao production, with nearly a dozen artisan chocolate companies taking cacao from bean to bar. Small farmers in the country's southern regions are responsible for most of the production, and the cocoa produced in Belize is valued as a fine-flavored product that fetches a premium price in world markets. While some of the raw cocoa is exported, artisanal chocolatiers process and locally market various authentically made Belizean chocolate products.

Have you ever wondered how chocolate is made? How do cacao beans turn into those delicious bars, drops, squares, bonbons, and truffles? First, the cacao pods (fruit) are picked from the tree, and then the seeds are removed by cracking the pods open. Each pod contains approximately 50-60 cacao beans surrounded by a thick, delicious pulp. The beans are then fermented and sun-dried before being roasted. The next step depends on the production level, but traditionally, in Maya communities, the bean shells are cracked, and the nibs are ground using an old-fashioned metate grinder. The metate has a super heavy stone base and a smaller oblong handle (mano) used to mash and grind the nibs until they form a thick paste. The ground nibs are mixed with sugar and milk, and the cocoa-to-milk/sugar ratio is adjusted to reach the desired taste. The more sugar and milk added, the sweeter and creamier the chocolate. The possibilities for chocolate are endless, including dark chocolate, milk chocolate, white chocolate, and even unique blends that include spices, fruits, and nuts. Belizean artisans also make chocolate wines, powders, soaps, and body scrubs.

Every year, we celebrate the luscious treat of chocolate during the Chocolate Festival of Belize. This fantastic festival grows every year and attracts hundreds of visitors from around Belize and overseas to what we call the Chocolate Capital of Belize, the Toledo District. This year's festival is held from May 17th to May 19th. The Chocolate Festival of Belize is the perfect reason to visit Southern Belize and the surrounding Toledo District. This annual event brings together what Toledo District offers - history, culture, music, cacao, cuisine, and charm! For more details, visit: https://chocolatefestivalbelize.com/



Navigating Belize Real Estate with Keller Williams

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Macarena Rose, Broker of Keller Williams Belize, moved to Belize in 2004 with two children, five dogs, and five cats. She wanted to enjoy Belize's breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural tapestry, and welcoming community. However, she encountered multiple problems with her task of buying a home for her family in Belize, including Gringo pricing and net listing scenarios.

Macarena's passion stems from not wanting you to suffer the same fate, which means having a trustworthy, knowledgeable reality firm to navigate the intricacies of the Belizean real estate market. Keller Williams Belize can supply the expertise you need, offering invaluable guidance and support to investors. Whether you're seeking a serene beachfront property, a lush tropical estate, or a vibrant urban dwelling, Belize provides a diverse range



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Keller Williams was founded in 1983 in Austin, Texas, and is the world's largest real estate franchise by agent count, with more than 1,100 offices and 189,000 agents. The franchise is also Number ONE in units and sales volume in the United States. In Belize, this allows our agents to work with the best of the best in the world.

Keller Williams BELIZE is ONE united office of agents, who work as a team all throughout Belize, and our agents can assist you anywhere, with agents in Ambergris Caye, Corozal, Placencia, Caye Caulker, San Ignacio, Belmopan, Hopkins and Punta Gorda.

With weekly training, including market insights and legal review, you are assured your Keller Williams agents shall provide you the highest level of expert knowledge of Belize Real Estate values and processes.

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Keller Williams Belize Broker, Macarena, is a Founding Member of the Belize Realtor Association (B.N.A.R.), is the Vice President of the Belize Landowners Association, has been featured on over a dozen HGTV shows and Belizean documentaries. In addition, she has been a speaker all over the world as to all things related to Belize Real Estate. Reach out to the highly experienced team of Keller Williams Belize agents today, for your one-stop resource to receive the service you deserve!

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EXPLORING THE ADVANTAGES OF INTERNATIONAL LENDING AND HOW YOU GAN BENEFIT



LUIGI WEWEGEPRESIDENT - CAYE INTERNATIONAL BANK

Part of your strategy for maximizing the use of your offshore accounts is to make the most of all the available financial services. That includes looking into options for offshore lending. Incorporating offshore lending into your financial strategy can serve various purposes, such as financing the acquisition of real estate, including condominiums, properties with existing buildings, and funding for construction projects.

Unlike domestic banks, which often show reluctance in financing properties located outside their home countries, Offshore banks can do so more easily, not to mention that there are benefits that can come your way by using financing opportunities through your offshore bank or institution.

Here are some of the advantages to consider before you make any decisions about where to finance your project.

Favorable Banking Laws and Policies

International banking regulations and laws do vary from one nation to another. You can use that to your advantage by learning more about banking laws in any nation where you want to set up international bank accounts. As you look over those laws and regulations, make sure you understand how they apply to non-citizens or even to expats who may choose to retire in those nations.

Dig a little deeper and look at the policies that specific international banks have in place. While all policies must comply with banking laws and regulations in that nation, there may still be some flexibility in how they are applied. Your goal is to understand how the laws and policies in each nation might be more favorable than what domestic lending would provide.

Tax Breaks Not Available in Home Country

The issue of taxes is always something you want to consider, even with international loans or mortgages. You already know what to expect from the tax structure at home. What remains to be determined is the type of tax obligation you would assume by using international financing.

As with banking laws and policies, tax laws vary between nations. You may find that you owe little to no tax on that international loan. There may or may not be an annual fee due by specific dates of the year. Identify all taxes and fees that would apply in a particular nation and compare the resulting figure to any annual tax obligation at home. You're likely to find that international lending would result in less of an obligation.



Finance in a More Conducive Political and Economic Climate

In today's world, it's impossible to ignore the political and economic activity taking place in different nations. What happens in some nations exerts significant influence in other parts of the world. Keeping that in mind, you may find that what's currently happening at home has a minimal impact on the economy or the political status in the nations where you have based your offshore accounts.

In other words, you may find that opting for international lending would allow you to enjoy a more stable setting regarding political issues and even the state of the economy. Notice what's happening now and the projections for the next decade or so. Back that up by looking at how the nation fared in years past. Basing your lending activity within that country may be more than a practical financing decision; it might give you more peace of mind.

The team at Caye International Bank can help you explore these options and come up with a plan that's to your advantage. Contact the Caye team today and learn more about what international lending can do for you. Contact the team by email at services@cayebank.bz.

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ISLAND CELEBRATIONS COMMEMORATE THE GROWTH OF

LA ISLA Bonita!

By Janelle Gonzalez

San Pedro is a vibrant town that celebrates its rich history and culture. Two important events are held yearly to commemorate the growth and development of Ambergris Caye from a small fishing island to a bustling top tourism destination in Belize. The caye is the largest of Belize's offshore islands, famous for its spectacular coral necklace, the Belize Barrier Reef, located just a short distance from its coast.

The island was once a tiny fishing village that valued its traditions. Although the community used to be small, with less than 100 residents, it has flourished and grown significantly to over twenty thousand residents. Despite all the changes, the people of San Pedro still take great pride in their island home, celebrating their heritage at every opportunity.

In June, we celebrate Dia de San Pedro (San Pedro Day), which honors the patron saint of the island and the first families who settled in Ambergris Caye. The Dia de San Pedro celebrations last an entire weekend, starting June 29th. The festival's first day is dedicated to the island's Patron Saints, San Pedro (Saint Peter) and San Pablo (Saint Paul). The San Pedro Roman Catholic Church leads a full day of activities to mark the occasion. The festivities continue into the weekend with the Miss San Pedro Pageant and a range of local and international entertainment at the Honourable Louis Sylvestre Sporting Complex.

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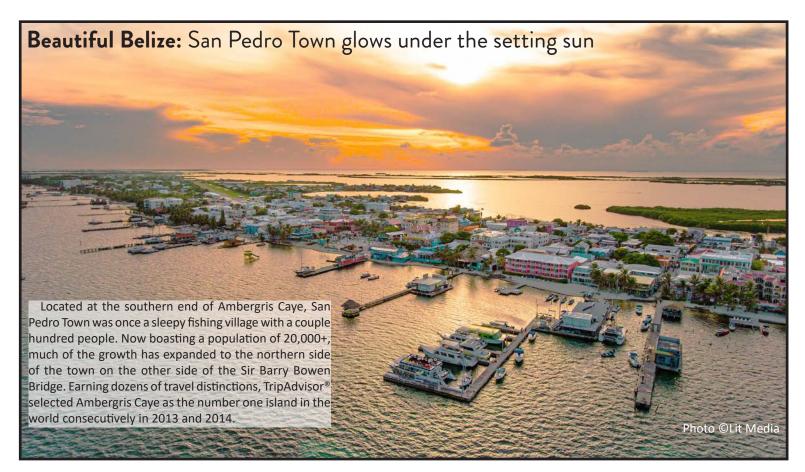


Later in the year, on November 27th, we celebrate Township Day, which recognizes the pioneers who played a significant role in developing the island from a small fishing village to a town and building a robust tourism industry. San Pedro officially became a town on November 27, 1984, under the leadership of former Mayor Gilberto "Chico" Gomez.

This year, we will be celebrating 40 years since becoming a town. Although this day has less fanfare, it is equally special to island residents.

Undoubtedly, our "Isla Bonita" has become a home for locals and visitors who fell in love with the island's charm. Whether you want to enjoy the culture, people, and many activities in our crystalline waters or simply relax on the beach, San Pedro Town has something for everyone.







In May 2023, at the remote Lighthouse Reef Atoll, a critical moment unfolded in the ongoing saga of marine conservation. Peggy, a mature female loggerhead turtle, was gently captured in-water by the dedicated team at MarAlliance. This marked a new chapter in both her life and marine research. Fitted with a satellite tag, Peggy spent the following year mostly in the same location in the Atoll and then suddenly in late March 2024 she embarked on an epic journey from Belize towards the U.S., meticulously tracked to shed light on the secretive life of sea turtles. But Peggy is not just any turtle; she was named in honor of MarAlliance's recently deceased Board Chair, Peggy O'Shaughnessy, a woman whose adventurous spirit and dedication to conservation continue to inspire.

Loggerhead turtles like Peggy face a gauntlet of challenges, driven by human activity and environmental change. From accidental capture in fishing nets, known as bycatch, to the dark tendrils of illegal trade and the relentless push of coastal development that destroys former nesting beaches, these ancient mariners navigate an increasingly fraught ocean. Additionally, rising temperatures and beach erosion—a direct consequence of climate change—threatens their nesting grounds, undermining their ability to reproduce successfully.

MarAlliance's decision to satellite tag Peggy at Lighthouse Reef Atoll was driven by a commitment to science and conservation. By understanding her migratory patterns and behavior, researchers can better advocate for protective measures along her migratory route and nesting sites. Peggy's journey, closely monitored and shared on Facebook and Instagram, turned her into an ambassador for her species. Her story, featured on Belize's national news channels such as Channel 7 and Channel 5, transcended scientific interest, touching the hearts of the public and raising awareness about the plight of sea turtles.

Peggy's satellite data is also providing invaluable insights. Each location ping maps a part of her journey and contributes to a broader understanding of the loggerhead's life at sea—information that is crucial for crafting effective conservation strategies. These strategies are not just about safeguarding turtles but also about preserving the balance of marine ecosystems. Loggerheads, like many marine species, are integral to the health of the ocean, affecting the dynamics of marine habitats and species interactions.

The data collected from Peggy's tag tells a story of resilience and survival. As she navigates through international waters, her path highlights the interconnected nature of oceanic ecosystems and the transboundary challenges of marine conservation. This journey underscores the necessity for international cooperation in environmental protection efforts, as marine conservation is a global issue that transcends national borders.

Peggy's story is a clarion call to action. It serves as a powerful reminder of the impact of human activities on marine life and the urgent need for concerted conservation efforts. Her tale inspires individuals and communities to advocate for oceans and the magnificent creatures that inhabit them. By supporting protected areas, sustainable fishing practices, and climate action, we contribute to a hopeful future for loggerhead turtles.

Continued on Page 20

Peggy's journey Continued from Page 19



In the spirit of Peggy O'Shaughnessy's adventurous legacy, let us continue to champion the cause of these noble sea farers. Through science, education, and community engagement, we can ensure that the story of loggerhead turtles like Peggy is not one of decline but of thriving survival and coexistence with humanity. Let us all be part of this uplifting journey towards a sustainable and vibrant oceanic world.

For more information about MarAlliance and to follow Peggy's journey, please visit https://maralliance.org.











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Embracing its Maya heritage,

Corozal

is emerging as an eco-tourism destination

By Janelle Gonzalez

A peaceful coastal town located just south of the Río Hondo, which marks the border between Mexico and Belize, Corozal Town is considered one of Belize's up-and-coming locations for retirees and those looking for an easy-going daily life. Corozal is home to a growing expatriate community, primarily residing in the northern tip of the town at Consejo Shores and along the seaside in the Sarteneja, Progresso, Copper Bank, and Chunox areas.

Once heavily reliant on the sugar industry, Corozal District has successfully diversified its economy. Today, it's not just about sugar but the sweet success of tourism and eco-tourism. As the country's tourism sector flourishes, the area is making significant strides in promoting eco-tourism. The town is leveraging its cultural and heritage assets to offer a unique experience to visitors, showcasing its adaptability and potential for growth.

While it may not compare to the booming tourist destination of Ambergris Caye or Caye Caulker, Corozal Town is an excellent spot for fishing trips in the bay, bird-watching tours in the nearby Shipstern Nature Reserve, and exploring its rich Maya heritage.

Continued on Page 21







Corozal emerging as an eco-tourism destination Continued from Page 20

Corozal, a vibrant community primarily inhabited by Mestizo-Maya, is a testament to the rich Maya heritage of Belize. The town takes immense pride in its Maya roots, which run deep throughout the area. This region once served as a crucial trading hub in the ancient Maya era. The archaeological sites of Cerros and Santa Rita, standing as silent witnesses to its past, have become significant tourist attractions, offering a glimpse into the glorious Maya civilization.

The local chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA) recently hosted a spectacular Maya Wedding Re-enactment Ceremony at Santa Rita. This annual event promotes the endless possibilities of the archaeological site not only as a place to visit but also as a wedding venue. For this event, the students from the local Junior Colleges, along with professional folkloric dancers from the neighboring Mexican city of Chetumal, re-enact the wedding between Maya Princess Tzazil-Ha and Spanish Conquistador Gonzalo Guerrero. The grand event is a tribute to keeping the Maya culture alive and a chance to relive history.

Santa Rita may not have the level of popularity that Xunantunich or Caracol does, but it does not lack in splendor! Believed to have once



been part of the tremendous coastal Maya city of Chactemal, occupied from 2000 BC to 1530 AD, Santa Rita is the perfect site for first-time exploration into the ancient Maya world.

The site is open seven days a week, 8AM to 5PM. A small park fee of \$5BZ for Belizeans and \$10BZ for foreign visitors is charged at the entrance. Sundays are considered family days in Belize, so Belizeans enter free at all archaeological sites across the country.

Wondering where to stay in Corozal? The town's tourism industry is still developing, so your choices are often charming family-owned inns and hotels on the coast or the southern part of Corozal. These accommodations are clean and comfortable, with spectacular views and a warm welcome. During our most recent trip to Corozal, we stayed at the Mirador Hotel, located just a five-minute walk from the main square and boasting stunning views of Corozal Bay. This quaint hotel is perfect for adventurous travelers looking for a unique getaway. For more information, contact the hotel at 501-422-0189 or email miradorhotelcoro@hotmail.com.



Calendar of Events



Belize Cashew Festival - May 14 & 15: A two-day event where artisans, chefs, and local cashew farmers come together to display and for cashew products. Taking place in Crooked Tree

The Chocolate Festival of Belize - May 17 to 19: Celebrate cacao, culture, and Southern Belize in collaboration with local partners and sponsors. Happening in the Toledo District.



Made in Belize Expo - June 1: A unique opportunity that brings together entrepreneurs, micro business owners, wholesalers, retail buyers and customers from all over the country at one key

location. Held at the National Agriculture & Tradeshow Grounds in Belmopan City.

Hopkins Mango Street Festival - June 8: Come and immerse yourself in the vibrant culture of Hopkins while enjoying delicious mango treats and exploring all the fest has to offer. Held in Hopkins Village in the Dangriga District.

San Pedro Beer Festival & Stew Chicken Competition - June 8: Hosted by the San Pedro Belize Tourism Industry Association Chapter, this annual event includes craft beers, local food, music, games for the kids and more. Saturday from 4pm to 11pm at the Saca Chispas Field in San Pedro Town.

Belize Archaeology Symposium - June 26: The Belize Archaeology Symposium (BAS) is recognized as the leading source for current archaeological information in Belize. Held at the San Ignacio Hotel in San Ignacio Town.



San Pedro Lobster Festival – July 1 to 13: Get ready for a celebration of your favorite lobster flavors and unforgettable moments. Lobster Crawl from July 1st to 12th. Block Party on July 13th at the Honourable Louis Sylvestre Sporting Complex.

Placencia Lobster Fest - July 5 to 7: Calling all seafood enthusiastic or an unforgettable celebration of all things lobster!

Caye Caulker Lobster Festival – July 12 to 14: The original Lobster Fest of Belize and is the only festival on Caye Caulker Village.

Grand Caribe Deep Sea Classic - July 11 to 14: One of the largest fishing tournaments in Belize to date with over 150K up for grabs. Held at Grand Caribe Resort in Ambergris Caye.

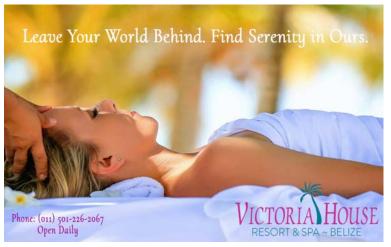
Benque Fiesta – July 12: Benque Viejo del Carmen hosts an annual celebration in honor of the town's patron saint, Nuestra Senor de Monte Carmelo (Our Lady of Mount Carmel) with live entertainment, food and drinks. Held at the Cancha Marshalleck Field in Benque Viejo del Carmen Village.

Belize International Music and Food Festival - July 27 & 28: Savour the Rhythm as the Belize Tourism Board presents a dynamic two-day international music and food festival that will showcase local and international musical artists as well as exceptional local cuisine. Happening at Honourable Louis Sylvestre Sporting Complex in San Pedro Town.



San Pedro Classic Fly-Fishing Tournament August 1– 3: A three-day tournament with a community focus and is open to all participants. Held at the Holiday Hotel in San Pedro Town.

For more details on these events, visit our My Beautiful Belize Calendar of Events at https://mybeautifulbelize.com/events/









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