

# LIFE & STYLE

VIRGIN ISLANDS

OUR LIFE - OUR STYLE - OUR ISLANDS MAGAZINE

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*Wedlock*  
Edition

*Mr. & Mrs.  
Nicola & Marley  
Donovan*

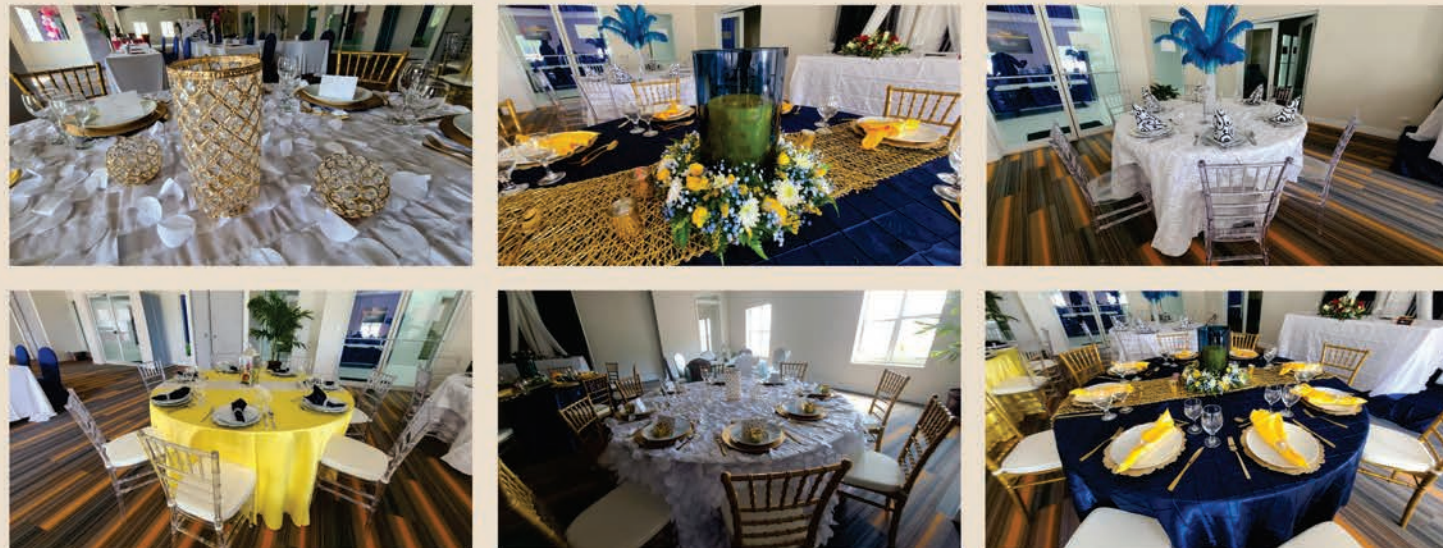




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# THE BIG PICTURE

Photo: Elton Callwood





**The Reverend Esther Georges** is an Episcopal Priest and Retired Deputy Director of the National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands

## OUR ISLANDS Hidden Gems for Your Caribbean Honeymoon

“Our honeymoon will shine our life long; its beams will only fade over your grave or mine.” Charlotte Brontë

The British Virgin Islands (BVI) is the ideal destination for a romantic retreat. This stunning sixty-island archipelago provides a plethora of activities for those seeking adventure or spaces for those searching for a quiet retreat for rejuvenation and revival.

**T**he islands are little green gems, with sizes ranging from Tortola at 21 square miles to Sandy Cay which is less than half an acre. Sixteen of these islands are inhabited, and most of the islands’ over 30,000 residents live on Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada and Jost Van Dyke.

As the custodians of some of the BVI’s most celebrated natural treasures, The BVI National Parks Trust manages twenty-one national parks, protecting unique areas in the territory comprising natural habitats for plants and animals, thus preserving the islands’ wildlife.

The continued preservation of these habitats ensures that their unique existing life forms continue to thrive and are preserved for present and future generations to enjoy. The unique features of these islands continue to attract visitors who come to enjoy their natural beauty.

The islands’ environment of verdant vegetation, unique topography and seas teeming with ocean creatures provides a dream destination for those seeking sun, sea and sand, making the islands an ideal destination for vacationing.

The preservation of these unique features

is the impetus for the development of resorts which preserve the natural environment while providing romantic retreats for the environmentally conscious and also attracting newlyweds seeking romantic and idyllic honeymoon retreats.

With its pristine beaches, turquoise waters, and idyllic resorts, the BVI offers the perfect location for couples to deepen their relationships and create memories to be shared over a lifetime.

Tortola, the largest island is home to its capital city, Road Town. The capital is home to the main government offices and

commercial activity. Virgin Gorda, the next largest island is considered the playground for tourism activity. Although only eight square miles, the island throbs with activity during the tourism season from November to April.

The first-class resorts on the island provide environments where couples can find rest, in addition to first-class restaurants on the island and neighbouring islands. There are several scenic beaches, most famous is the Baths National Park. Virgin Gorda is the perfect destination for sailing, swimming, snorkelling, and diving.

The islands enjoy sunny skies, and warm tropical water and are home to some of the best dive sites in the Caribbean. These islands are often referred to as ‘Nature’s Little Secrets’ which although now well-known, still offer the charm of a unique mix of nature and people living harmoniously. Many first-time visitors make these islands their go-to vacation destination returning annually over many years.

On your first visit, you will fall in love with the physical beauty of the islands, enjoy the special hospitality of the residents, and keep returning to enjoy ‘Nature’s Little Secrets’.



# Getting Married in the British Virgin Islands

The right wedding destination enables couples to begin their weddings on the right foot. Choosing the British Virgin Islands can be one of the best decisions one can make. It offers a series of famously romantic sceneries that sparkles up the wedding memories. From seductive crescents of dazzling white sand and blue sea, backed by lush jungles to sublime slices of reef-fringed shore, the weddings and romance services set the right tone for your big day by setting a blissful reception, wedding, marriage, and honeymoon.

If you are a local, who is planning your dream wedding, what is a better way than to actually follow our popular sayings; "I live where you vacation." This statement can turn into "I live where you vacation, and I'm going to make it my destination wedding."

## MARRIAGE RULES AND REGULATIONS

Upon arrival in the Virgin Islands, you can apply for a Marriage Licence at the Registrar General's Office. It is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

A marriage licence takes one (1) working day to process. Once the Government has granted a licence, it remains valid for three (3) months from the date it is signed.

### At the Registrar General's Office, you will be required:

- To present a US\$340 postage stamp (purchased from the Registrar General's Office or Post Office) for a Special Licence. To qualify for a special licence, you must be present at the time of application and plan to be a resident/present in the Virgin Islands for at least one day.
- To present US\$120 postage stamp (purchased from the Registrar General's

Office or Post Office) for an Ordinary Licence, if you have been resident in the Virgin Islands for 15 days or more.

- To show proof of your identity and your resident status i.e. the day you arrived in the Virgin Islands (via your passport).
- To show proof of your marital status (including certified copies of Decree(s) Absolute for divorced spouse or Death Certificate(s) of deceased spouse).
- To have two persons to witness (and to sign) your application for the licence. Please note that these two witnesses need not be the same two witnesses who are present at your Marriage Ceremony.
- Please note that you can always request persons in the Virgin Islands to be witnesses at the Registrar General's Office and at your Marriage Ceremony.

Having applied for the licence, you should then schedule an appointment for the date and time you propose to be married. If you

have telephoned your appointment from abroad, you will need to confirm it at the Registrar General's Office at this time.

## Ceremonies Performed by the Registrar General

Weddings are performed by the Registrar General outside the Office between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday and inside the Office between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

In the event of any 'acts of God' whether it be heavy rain, storms or earthquakes, the Registrar General or Marriage Officer reserves the right to postpone the wedding to a more convenient time agreed by both parties.

At the Registrar General's Office, you will be required to complete an application form showing your names as shown on your travel documents, ages, occupations, marital status, and the names of two witnesses (these two

witnesses must be present at the Ceremony). Please be careful to accurately spell the names of the witnesses. Any correction of an error will attract a charge of US\$15. You must also then indicate the proposed venue for the marriage ceremony.

If you wish to be married at the Registrar General's Office, you will be required to pay a fee of US\$340. If you wish the Registrar General to perform your wedding ceremony outside the office, the fee is US\$220. All cheques should be made payable to the Accountant General. If the Registrar General is required to go to one of the adjoining islands of the Virgin Islands, for instance Jost Van Dyke, Virgin Gorda, Peter Island, Guana Island, Salt Island, Anegada, Norman Island etc., you will be required to pay the Registrar General's transportation to that Island.

If you wish to be married in the church of your choice, wedding banns must be published on three (3) consecutive Saturdays or Sundays in that church. You must make arrangements with the Minister of the church in advance. You can also be married in a church by Special Marriage Licence, but those arrangements will also have to be made with a church Minister.

It would be wise to travel with your driver's licence or birth certificate in addition to your essential travel documents, i.e. your passports. In addition, all documents showing your marital status should be originals or certified as true copies of the original.

Our marriage certificates with the Registrar General's seal are official legal documents and the first marriage certificate is free once

the Registrar General performs the wedding ceremony. You may, however, wish to check with your local authorities in the event that the certificate requires to be legally authenticated by means of an apostille. If apostilles are required, these can also be prepared at the Registrar General's Office on payment of US\$40.

## Fees

- A marriage license \$120.00
- A special marriage license \$220.00
- Marriage celebrated in the Registrar's Office building \$120.00

Every general search for a particular entry:

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- Issue of a certificate of publication of banns \$35.00
- Marriage celebrated by a Civil Marriage Officer \$340.00
- To Government Medical Officer for Certificate in respect of a clinical marriage where a special visit is not required \$30.00
- To Government Medical Officer for Certificate in respect of a clinical marriage where a special visit is required \$40.00
- Late arrival for wedding outside the office by Registrar General \$75.00

You can prepare your Marriage License application online.



Photos by Mar Javierto



# Mr. & Mrs. Nicola & Marley Donovan

## HOW DID YOU TWO MEET?

We go way back. First meeting – we would have to say probably the HIHO REDSTRIPE surf series on Josiah's Bay back in the early 2000s when we were about 9 or 10 years old.

## HOW DID YOU TWO GET ENGAGED?

We had been together for 8 or 9 years and we went to visit Nicola's mother's home town of Chester in England. We were on a walk down the river with our two oldest sons and as we crossed one of the bridges out came a ring. Of course the answer was an immediate YES.

## NUMBER OF INVITED GUESTS ?

Approximately 150

## HOW DID YOU TWO PERSONALIZE THE EVENT?

We did everything personal to us. From the invitations, the location, the décor, the food. It was a family affair, so family and friends came together and contributed in whichever way they could.

## WHAT SONG WAS USED FOR YOUR FIRST DANCE?

Bailando – Enrique Iglesias and Sean Paul

## WHERE DID YOU HONEYMOON?

We had friends and family visiting, so we did our honeymoon staycation style. Though we did manage to sneak away to Dominica for a

week in October which was beautiful.

## WHAT WAS THE CEREMONY VENUE CHOSEN?

We chose Sprat Point, right at the end of Trellis Bay.

## WHO WAS YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER/ VIDEOGRAPHER:

Mar Javierto

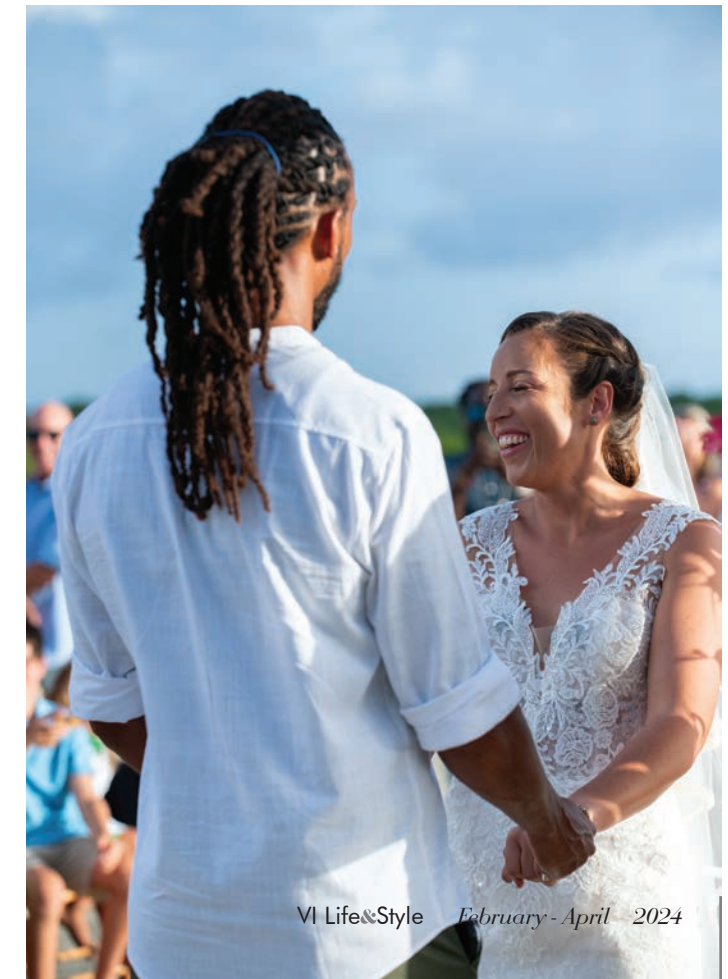
## WHO SERVED AS COORDINATOR (WEDDING PLANNER?):

Zoe Sorrentino – Evolve Events

## WHICH BUSINESS CATERED YOUR SPECIAL OCCASION?

We had several caterers who joined forces





to create an amazing buffet setup. We had Irie Ites, MLJ Restaurant, and Martin Francis on the BBQ, followed by a dessert buffet by Kenetha Ashton. Late night patties and Johnny Cakes provided by Crandalls. The food was all incredible.

**WHERE WAS THE RECEPTION HELD?**

Jeremy's Kitchen – Trellis Bay. This was the perfect venue for us. It was a beautiful setting with plenty of space for all our guests. They went above and beyond to make sure our day was everything we imagined.

**WHO WAS THE MAIN HAIR STYLIST/SALON:**

Laura DelBeato – BLOW hair

**WHO SERVED AS THE MAKE-UP ARTIST?**

Claire Wassell- Sayuri La Belle Make up.

**WHAT BUSINESS OR PERSON CREATED THE MAGICAL WEDDING CAKE?:**

Nicola's Mum ☺

**WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE DÉCOR AND FLOWERS?:**

Nea Talbot – Full Belly Farm (Sage Mountain)

**WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE TO FUTURE BRIDE AND GROOMS BEFORE THEIR WEDDING DAY?:**

Good Food, Good Music and good company. Then just enjoy it. Don't let small details get to you. As long as you are enjoying it that is what matters – it really is the best day of your life.



# Delrosa's Cake Boutique

*Creating sweet whimsical memories*

We all associate sweet treats with celebration. Each one of us marked our birthdays over the years with a centrepiece candle-studded cake, no wedding is complete without a towering baked offering and special meals more often, ends on a sweet note. While catering to locals, visitors, and the destination wedding traveller, VI Life&Style Magazine sat down with young entrepreneur Delrosa S. Hillhouse, owner of Delrosa's Cake Boutique in Virgin Gorda, who puts her all into ensuring these occasions become sweet whimsical memories.

Interview by Elton Callwood



Delrosa S. Hillhouse



**L&S: What exactly is your job title?**  
**Baker, Cake Decorator, Pastry Chef, or all the above?**

I would say all the above.

**L&S: What inspired you to choose this career path?**

I grew up in a family where I am surrounded by bakers. From my grandmother, aunts, great-aunt and cousins. It also allows me to express myself artistically.

**L&S: How long have you been in business and what qualification do you have?**

I have a degree in confectionary arts from

Bonnie Gordon College in Toronto, Canada. I am also a Pastry Chef at Rosewood (Little Dix Bay). I can proudly say I have at least seven years as a cake artist and four and a half years as a pastry chef.

**L&S: In this creative line of business what would you say is the most creative work you have done?**

Weddings! I love wedding! April 6, 2022, I did a seven-tiered pink cake that was covered in flowers. It was a challenge, but it made me proud in the end.

**L&S: Can you make sugar flowers? If I choose fresh blooms, will you**

**work with my florist?**

Yes, I am a flower lover. Creating sugar flower maybe challenging at first but once you get the hang of it, it is truly an amazing process. I also love working with fresh flowers as well.

**L&S: How far in advance will my wedding cake be prepared?**

I love my desserts to be fresh. Wedding cakes usually take some time so at least three to four days in advance.

**L&S: How are your wedding cakes priced?**

I always make sure to ask my clients if they have a budget so that I can work around it or



offer something that is in their budget.

**L&S: Do you provide cake stands?**

Yes, we provide a variety of cake stands.

**L&S: What's the delivery process? Do you deliver to the reception?**

I have something call a cake safe transporter, it allows me to transport all my cakes safely to any event land or overseas. We always deliver all our cakes, to take away some of the stress on your wedding day.

**L&S: What makes you and your business unique?**

I love to choose from the best and freshest ingredients, all my packaging is personalised to suit my clients. It is an experience that you will forever remember.

**L&S: Sometimes your clients have no idea what they want. How do you give them direction?**

I first ask my client what they are looking for in terms of flavour, then I will ask them to describe what colors, if they like fresh flowers or sugar flowers. Then I will draw out something on my ipad so they can have an idea of what they will get.

**L&S: What drives you to continue, giving your time and energy to your**



**business, even when it's hard?**

My son, also this is my passion even though at times it might be hard. It will kill me if I have to give up on something I am so passionate about. Me having a legacy to leave behind for my kids is my drive to not give up.

**L&S: Besides Wedding cakes, what else do you offer?**

At Delrosa's Cake Boutique we offer a variety of treats such as cupcakes, cookies, pastries, and customised cakes.

**L&S: What advice do you have for brides to be as it relates to making your job easier?**

Don't be afraid to say what you want! It's your day. If you must call or check in feel free to do so.

**L&S: What's your long-term vision for your business?**

I am working towards opening a store front where I can have all my treats on display and people can come in and purchase. I would also

love to be able to teach cake classes and have private Cake and Sip.

**L&S: What one word best describes your business?**

Whimsical

**L&S: Is there anything else you'd like to share with readers or any requests you have of them?**

For anyone who has supported me during the years I would like to say thank you! It is because of my clients' support is the reason I have reach to this point. Apart from trusting in God, my only request is, please continue to support the young entrepreneurs of the BVI.

**L&S: Where can my readers find you and connect with you online?**

You can connect with me on Facebook (Delrosa's Cake Boutique) – Instagram (delrosa\_cakeboutique) – Email: delrosacakeboutique@gmail.com Readers can find us on Instagram, on Facebook or call

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# To Have and To Hold

## 50 Years of Bliss with ETHLYN & DANLEY RHYMER

The love story of Ethlyn and Danley Rhymer started in 1951, unbeknownst to either of them. Morris and Lilian Turnbull gave birth to a bouncing baby girl and Thomas and Sylvaneta Rhymer gave birth to a baby boy. Ethlyn shared that they both attended the then Cane Garden Bay Methodist Church School as they grew up in neighbouring villages, but never interacted with each other.

By Claudia Hodge

**A**s faith will have it, in the late 60's the love birds paths crossed when Danley, his late brother Stanley and his late sister Ethlyn joined the Cane Garden Baptist Church youth group. The courtship began soon after they were engaged and married on 12th January 1974.

In the early years of their marriage, the couple experienced financial difficulties, as was common in the Virgin Islands during that time. To provide comfort and financial stability for his family, Danley, like many others, along with his wife left the Virgin Islands to seek employment on St. John, USVI at Caneel Bay Hotel, where he worked for many years. As the family grew, after the birth of their second child, the Rhymers made a life-changing decision to return to Tortola, to the comfort of close family and friends. A decision that they have never regretted despite the challenges faced. Family was more important than making money.

The Rhymers both agree that they are each other's best friend. They spend lots of time together, enjoy each other's company and enjoy having a good laughter together. The foundation that their relationship is built on is the relationship they have with God and

praying together daily. Love exudes them, as they are often seen holding hands.

Ethlyn shared how her faith in God has and continues to be the pillar or glue that keeps their relationship together. She further stated, "At a very young age I was led to faith by women at a revival service at the Cane

Garden Bay Methodist Church and it changed my life completely. My faith in God has given me the strength to cope and endure all the tests and trials that have come over these 50 years of marriage. Without Him, it would have been humanly impossible. I have learned that God is interested in every area of my life, including my marriage."

The love birds continue to count their many blessings. They have achieved many successes in life but their family tops them all. The love and support of three loving children, one devoted son-in-law and one brilliant grandson. "Over the past five years this family has been severely tested but we have stuck together and continue to realise that Family Matters", said Danley.

As we wrap up our discussion on their 50 year journey, Ethlyn share her top three for building a strong, everlasting marriage: "cherish each other- don't take each other for granted; have fun together - don't focus on whether the toothpaste is squeezed right or how many times the toilet lid is up or down; and Pray together.

She also shared the below experience that has become an enjoyable memory for them to share with family and friends, and also acts as reminder that brings focus to their strong





union. “Danley and I lived in our own home, but his parents’ home was not too far away. Soon after our marriage I remember I had prepared a meal out of a Caribbean recipe book and was waiting for my husband to come home to enjoy it. To my surprise my husband said he had already eaten by his mother. My emotions took over. I was disappointed and angry. Didn’t he realise that we were now married, and his meals were to be prepared by me? I fussed and cried although he kept saying he would eat it later. To me the damage was done, and he couldn’t fix it. However, as I recall, we made up and it didn’t make a wedge between us nor his mom and me. She was the best mother-in-law anyone could have. I

have reminded him of this memory from time to time as something to laugh about.”

The couple recommends that “before marriage, take the time to get to know each other and we don’t mean sexually. Find out each other’s hopes and dreams; the core values that govern each other’s lives; what drives him/her; is he/she a nice, kind person or displaying signs of selfishness. Check how he/she treat their parents and friends.

Living with someone to determine if you’re compatible for marriage is unadvisable. Love someone for who they are and not for what they have. Having lots of money is not guaranteed to hold a marriage together. Do not enter into a marriage if you’re already

planning an escape route if things turn sour. Do not enter into a marriage if you are unwilling to give up all your old love relationships. Get to know Almighty God in a personal relationship. He can sustain you through your marriage.”

Photos of Ethlyn and Danley broke Facebook a few weeks ago when family shared an incredible 50th anniversary photo shoot and photos of surprise intimate celebration with close family and friends. They are both retired and currently share time with their close net family in the mainland USA and here at home. They look forward to enjoying many more anniversaries granted to them by God.

# Congratulations!

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# Cakes by Trisette & Catering

As a child, I first realized my love and passion for baking bread after watching my grandfather Leopold Todman bake bread every Friday afternoon for his family. I can still remember watching from the corner of the door, him kneading the dough.

Tesha Todman



Years went by and my aunt, Mrs. Euna Browne-Todman, introduced me to the world of pastries and cooking; teaching us how to make cakes and tarts. She loved making apple cakes. My mother Hyacinth Selkridge also a driving force in these areas, for months encouraged me to try out her black cake recipe. One Saturday night I finally did. You see, it was all about trial and error

and me becoming the human hobart mixer LOL. Fast forwarding years later to present day. My company, Cakes By Trisette and Catering was born in New Haven, Connecticut after professional academic training was completed. A really close friend subsequently recommended me to one of her friends, after having previously sampled my cuisine from time to time. Unknown to me, this opened doors that I never imagined possible. At one event, a single individual who could handle

both food and pastries were required. I totally understood that. This newly opened door facilitated by Mayor Tony Harp of New Haven Connecticut, paved the path for similar opportunities with clients such as: United States Representative Rosa Delaura, United States Senator Chris Murphy, NAACP chapter of New Haven, Dr. Gary, and Deborah Desir.

This exposure and these experiences were both humbling and edifying. The numerous long nights and hard work resulted in



stronger and well-respected work ethics and techniques.

Humility and appreciation are the hallmark of Trisette's. Whenever opportunities arise for new events, I embrace every juncture and a pathway towards honing my culinary skillset. Being back in the BVI has taught me a lot of patience, which I might add has contributed greatly towards my personal and professional growth. Being offered opportunities to cater and bake meals and pastries for many individuals in the BVI has been tremendously fulfilling. Having had the pleasure of catering for Summer Sizzle 2023 and now 2024, solidifies in my mind that, "hey, maybe you just can cook and bake after all."

I was, and always will be very grateful for this opportunity. My words of encouragement to

everyone is, "if your dream is to work in the culinary world: never give up. It may take time but it will happen".

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# Outdoor Adventure

## Snorkeling The Indians

In the sparkling sapphire waters of the British Virgin Islands, there is a captivating archipelago known as The Indians. The Indians stand as one of the most popular dive site in the British Virgin Islands, second only to the legendary wreck of the RMS Rhone. It stands out with its four majestic pinnacles rising dramatically from the ocean floor.

**T**his enchanting place is not only a visual spectacle but also one of the best snorkeling and diving spots in the entire region.

Just half a mile north of Norman Island, the beauty of The Indians from top to bottom, is breath-taking. Above the water, these rocky formations are a sight to behold from its 50-foot sandy bottom. From a distance, these

four rocky pinnacles are said to resemble a Native American chief's headdress, earning them their name.

The Indians offers an alluring appeal to snorkelers. The shallower side of the rocks serves as a popular snorkeling spot, offering mooring opportunities for boats seeking refuge in the shelter of Pelican Island. The crystal blue depths of The Indians are ideal, providing an opportunity to swim amongst a

vibrant dance of blue chromis, creole wrasse, angel fish, jelly fish, and numerous other colorful fish and marine wildlife. With four-day moorings available on the west side of the rocks, visitors have the chance to immerse themselves in the vibrant underwater world; however, caution is necessary, as surface currents in the area demand attention.

It is also a perfect diving spot. Here, corals and gorgonians paint the rocky formations, creating a stunning display. Nestled among the pinnacles are a small tunnel and a cave, creating unique underwater features that divers can't resist exploring. The lavish corals and sponges add a burst of color, contrasting against the rocky ledges and steep walls that reach towards the surface.

It is one of those sites with many passageways, that will leave you yearning to wonder what is

around the next corner. A large cave, filled with Glassy Sweepers, awaits on the east side of the rocks. Its crystal-clear waters are also host to a kaleidoscope of other marine life, with vibrant coral reefs beckoning divers in, with its array of colors. From parrotfish to angelfish, and even clownfish, the region's tropical fish species mesmerize divers. Sea turtles including hawksbills and graceful rays add to the allure, creating unforgettable encounters beneath the waves. A saddle between two of the pinnacles allows access to a broad, shallow pool, serving as an invitation to divers to follow the arched swim-throughs that eventually will lead them back to where they began.

As the sun streaks its rays across the swells, it creates mesmerizing photo opportunities that can hardly be resisted. The Indians are not simply admired for their natural beauty. They also hold historical significance, inspiring the classic novel *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson. These caves and the surrounding marine life found within their depths leave a lasting impression on sailors and storytellers alike. The wrecks of old ships, now vibrant artificial reefs, embrace a diversity of marine life, showcasing the historical legacy of the British Virgin Islands.

While the dive and snorkeling sites of The



Indians are popular, they are also carefully protected. The BVI National Parks Trust installs over 120 moorings throughout the area, ensuring the fragile ecosystem remains preserved. Preserving the reefs and pristine marine environment is a priority in the British Virgin Islands. The fragility of the reefs is a reminder of the impact of pollution, and efforts are made to educate visitors about the harmful effects of plastic and chemical-laden sunscreens. Respect for the underwater world is paramount. We urge that you consider preparations to dive carefully to protect yourself and protect your diving environment, so that it will be sustainable for

many years to come. When exploring the underwater wonders of the British Virgin Islands, it is important to consider the best time to dive. The dry season, from December to May, offers clearer skies and minimal rainfall, providing optimal underwater visibility and safer diving conditions. During these months, calm seas facilitate smooth boat travel to diving sites, while warm water temperatures welcome divers without the need for thick wetsuits. Arrange with a local dive center to explore this underwater adventure who will advise you on what would be required to enjoy an unforgettable afternoon with the Indians.







# Major Sponsors Return For 2024

As the 2024 BVI Spring Regatta approaches, three major long-term sponsors continue to support the event: Nanny Cay Resort & Marina, Mount Gay Rum, and Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina.

## Nanny Cay Resort & Marina

Nanny Cay has been host and presenting sponsor since 2002, providing the much-loved Regatta Village - party central with event stage, music, bars, food vendors, and many tall tales- and world-class marina

facilities for hassle-free and convenient dockside life at the end of the race day.

Its full-service marina has berths for 320 boats. A Quantum Sails loft is on-site for overnight repairs. Nanny Cay also includes a 52-room hotel and waterfront townhouses for rental; restaurants and bars; a chandlery;

a small supermarket; shops and boutiques; a dive shop; free WiFi service property-wide.

The Round Tortola Race for the Nanny Cay Cup kicks off the two-day Sailing Festival in the lead up to the BVI Spring Regatta.

"Hosting the BVI Spring Regatta is a highlight of our year," said Miles Sutherland



Pilch, General Manager. "We have worked hard to build one of the leading marinas in the Caribbean and it's very satisfying to see so many competitors enjoying the regatta night life, a short walk from their berth."

## Mount Gay Rum

The ubiquitous Mount Gay Rum has been the drink of choice since the BVI Spring Regatta's inception in 1972 and the tradition continues for 2024 as the Official Rum of the BVI Spring Regatta.

Mount Gay, the world's oldest running rum distillery, will be front and centre in the

Regatta Village with the Mount Gay Rum Bar, the much-coveted Mount Gay Rum "red cap", giveaways and prizes.

The Mount Gay Rum Race Day kicks off the first of three days of racing for the 2024 BVI Spring Regatta. Class winners can expect to celebrate their success with a special tippie courtesy of Mount Gay.

"We proudly sponsor the world-renowned BVI Spring Regatta, celebrating our rich history as the oldest rum brand in the world. Our commitment to supporting Regattas in the Caribbean and around the world is a testament to our passion for adventure and



exploration. This year's festival promises to be a truly unforgettable experience, with exclusive Mount Gay gear, unforgettable entertainment, and expertly crafted aged rums. Join us in celebrating the spirit of discovery and the thrill of competition at the regatta village, where memories are made to last a lifetime."

## Scrub Island, Spa Resort & Marina

The Scrub Island Invitational on day two of the Sailing Festival takes competitors on a 12nm race up the Sir Francis Drake Channel to Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina. The relatively short race to Scrub Island gives sailors plenty of time to enjoy the outstanding Scrub Island hospitality. The 2024 race will be the fleet's sixth visit to this exclusive island. Competitors are met with cold drinks and a sizzling BBQ on the deck overlooking the marina and anchorage. Very quickly crew members, sizzling themselves, seek the cooling waters of Scrub Island's two-tier pool, where they work on the Caribbean art of bobbing with a cold one.

Scrub Island family now includes the old favourite, Marina Cay, and regular shuttles run between the resort, Marina Cay, and Trellis Bay.

"The Spring Regatta is a much-anticipated event, and something our entire team looks forward to supporting each year," stated Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina General Manager Sandra Grisham- Clothier. "It's a thrill to welcome both new and familiar competitors from all over the world to enjoy our private island paradise for a day."



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## Embracing Diversity: *International Day of Persons with Disabilities*

As we celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, it is a poignant moment to reflect on the experiences of those whose daily lives are marked by challenges many of us can scarcely fathom. In a world that often takes the simplest aspects of life for granted, it becomes imperative to cultivate empathy, and a deeper understanding of the struggles faced by persons with disabilities.

The lens through which we perceive life may be fundamentally altered when we pause to consider the hurdles that others overcome with unwavering determination. Every step, every interaction, and every achievement for someone with a disability represents a triumph over adversity—a testament to the strength of the human spirit.

It is crucial to recognize that disability is not a monolithic experience. The spectrum is vast, encompassing a diverse range of physical, cognitive, and sensory conditions.

**This International Day calls for an embrace of this diversity, encouraging conversations that foster inclusivity rather than perpetuating stigmas or misconceptions.**

Imagine navigating a world where simple tasks become Herculean feats. The daily commute transforms into an intricate

dance of accessibility challenges, where ramps, elevators, and accommodations become lifelines. The essence of this day lies not only in acknowledging these struggles but in taking concrete steps to dismantle the barriers that impede the full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.

By fostering a society that prioritizes accessibility and inclusion, we embark on a journey towards a world where everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive. It's a call to action for governments, businesses, and communities to ensure that no one is left behind. From accessible infrastructure to inclusive employment practices, the pathway to a more equitable future requires a collective commitment to change.

Moreover, on this day, let us also celebrate the extraordinary talents and contributions that persons with disabilities bring to our global tapestry. Their unique perspectives enrich our communities, challenging us to see the world through a different lens. When we create environments that value diversity, we pave the way for innovation, creativity, and progress.

So, as we commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, let us approach it with a profound sense of empathy. Let us seek to understand the silent battles fought and appreciate the resilience that shines through. In doing so, we not only honour the strength of those with disabilities but also recognize the shared humanity that unites us all.



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# Understanding Glaucoma: A Vital Awareness Campaign

## Introduction:

Glaucoma is a serious eye condition that often progresses silently, leading to irreversible vision loss. This article aims to raise awareness about glaucoma, its risk factors, symptoms, and the importance of early detection for the general public.

## Understanding Glaucoma:

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases characterized by damage to the optic nerve, usually caused by elevated intraocular pressure. The optic nerve (the main nerve that is associated with vision), is crucial for transmitting visual information from the eye to the brain. When this nerve becomes damaged, there can be a build-up of pressure within the eyes. However, there are cases where the pressure in the eyes is completely normal.

Early detection of glaucoma is the best way to avoid further damage. Without timely intervention, glaucoma can result in permanent visual impairment and even blindness.

## Risk Factors:

Several factors increase the risk of developing glaucoma, including age, family history, ethnicity, and certain medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, migraine, sickle cell anaemia, and previous eye injury. Individuals over the age of 60, those with a family history of glaucoma, and people of African, Hispanic, or Asian descent should be particularly vigilant about regular eye check-ups.



## Symptoms:

One of the challenges with glaucoma is that it often develops without noticeable symptoms in its early stages. As the disease progresses, individuals may experience peripheral vision loss, tunnel vision, blurred vision, or halos around lights. Regular eye examinations are crucial for detecting glaucoma before significant damage occurs.

## Importance of Regular Eye Check-ups:

Routine eye exams play a crucial role in early glaucoma detection. During these exams, eye care professionals can measure intraocular pressure, examine the optic nerve, and assess visual fields. Early detection allows for effective management and helps prevent further vision loss.

## Treatment Options:

While glaucoma is not curable, various treatment options aim to manage intraocular pressure and slow down the progression of the disease. Medications, (in the form of tablets and eye drops), laser therapy, and surgical procedures are available, depending on the severity and type of glaucoma.

## Community Involvement:

Creating glaucoma awareness involves the collective effort of communities, healthcare professionals, and organizations. Public health campaigns, educational programs, and community events can help disseminate information about the importance of regular eye check-ups and early detection.

## Conclusion:

Raising awareness about glaucoma is essential to protect individuals from irreversible vision loss. Glaucoma happens to be one of the leading causes of blindness. By understanding the risk factors, recognizing symptoms, and prioritizing regular eye examinations, we can collectively contribute to preserving vision and promoting eye health in our communities. Let us join hands in spreading awareness and ensuring that no one faces the silent threat of glaucoma without the knowledge and tools to combat it.



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# Get to the Heart of the Matter

## Learn the numbers to know to ensure a healthy heart for life

Let's face it – 2024 is here and we might as well, if you haven't already, begin to think about what the new year entails. Many of us begin the New Year with a bang: health resolutions, new habits and good intentions – and after a few weeks, it's not unusual to lose momentum and slack off on your newly adopted exercise regime or diet. Then, you must contend with that pesky chocolate holiday in February.

By **Brittany Gamberi, Family Nurse Practitioner**

**C**ertain routine tests provide valuable information about your health outlook and help you know how to best care for your heart: blood pressure, cholesterol level, and waist circumference.

### Blood pressure

Your blood pressure measures the force of blood pressing against the arteries as your heart pumps blood. It is represented by two numbers, the systolic and diastolic. Your systolic pressure is the measurement of pressure while your heart is pumping blood, and diastolic pressure refers to your heart's pressure at rest.

A normal blood pressure reading is a systolic (top) number under 120 mmHg and a diastolic (bottom) number under 80 mmHg. Prehypertension – a condition of elevated risk for high blood pressure – refers to blood pressure readings between 120-139 (systolic) and 80-89 (diastolic).

Prehypertension can be managed with diet, exercise and medication, but can also advance to full-blown hypertension: 140-59 over 90-99 mmHg.

According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, about one in three U.S. adults have high blood pressure. And, because high blood pressure has no symptoms, many people have the condition for years without knowing it. That's why it's important to know your blood pressure so that you can make appropriate lifestyle choices and, if necessary, begin treating the condition with medication. Left untreated, high blood pressure can damage your heart, blood vessels, kidneys and other organs. It can lead to coronary artery disease, heart failure, stroke, kidney failure, and other serious health conditions.

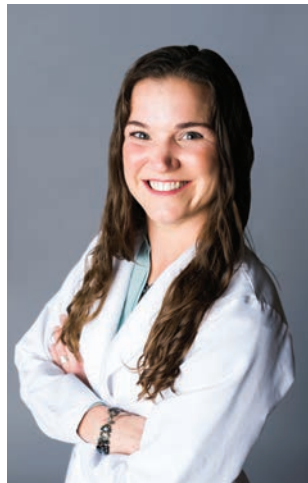
Blood pressure also rises with age. Men over age 45 and women over age 55 have an increased risk of hypertension. Other factors, such as your ethnic background, a family history of high blood pressure, or being

overweight or obese, can elevate your risk. There are other risks for high blood pressure that you can control, such as avoiding high-sodium foods, smoking, excessive use of alcohol, and getting regular exercise.

### Cholesterol level

Keeping the heart and blood healthy go hand-in-hand – the level of cholesterol in the blood is a major factor in your heart health. Cholesterol is a naturally occurring substance in the blood that is necessary for producing cell membranes and certain hormones, and supporting other body functions. Its bad reputation comes from the health problems that occur when there is too much cholesterol in the blood. High blood cholesterol is a primary risk factor in heart disease and stroke.

Approximately 75 percent of the cholesterol in our blood is produced in our bodies, and 25 percent from the food we eat. The amount of cholesterol your body produces is determined by your genetic background.



**Brittany Gamberi -**  
Family Nurse Practitioner

A blood test ordered by your doctor will measure the total blood cholesterol, low-density lipoprotein (LDL, also known as "bad" cholesterol), high-density lipoprotein (HDL, also known as "good" cholesterol), and triglycerides. A total cholesterol level of less than 200 mg/dL is desirable; 200 to 239 mg/dL is considered borderline high; and 240 mg/dL or above is considered high blood cholesterol. According to the AHA, a total cholesterol of 240 mg/dL and up more than doubles the risk of heart disease.

In addition to your total cholesterol score, it's important to know how your numbers add up. A high HDL number – above 60 mg/dL – is considered ideal, as this protects against heart disease. An LDL cholesterol level of less than 100 mg/dL is optimal, but levels of 100-129 mg/dL are also acceptable. The ideal LDL score varies from person to person, depending on your genetic background and other risk factors for heart disease or diabetes. In recent years, physicians have discovered that in patients with existing coronary artery disease, an LDL number below 70 will reduce the risk of progression of disease.

The American Heart Association recommends that all adults age 20 and over have a cholesterol test at least every five years. Your physician may test your cholesterol more frequently if you have high cholesterol or risk factors.

### Waist size

A slender waist is not just a matter of looking good, but also maintaining good health. Numerous studies have linked waist size with heart health. People who carry fat around the waist – an "apple" shape as opposed to a "pear" shape – are more likely to develop health problems than those with extra weight in the hips and thighs, even if their body mass index falls in the "normal" range. Guidelines published by National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, in cooperation with the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease set a healthy waist limit of 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men.

Extra weight around the middle raises

your risk of a variety of other conditions, in addition to heart disease: diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, cancer, sleep apnea, liver disease, gallbladder disease and osteoarthritis.

To measure your waist circumference, place a tape measure around your bare abdomen just above your hip bone. The tape should be snug (without pressing inward on the skin) and your stomach should be relaxed.

Remember that this information is not intended to replace the advice of your regular primary health provider, but rather to increase awareness and help equip patients with information to facilitate conversations with their physician.

Sources:  
National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health); American Heart Association, [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org); National Institutes of Health, [nih.gov](http://nih.gov); WebMD, [webmd.com](http://webmd.com)

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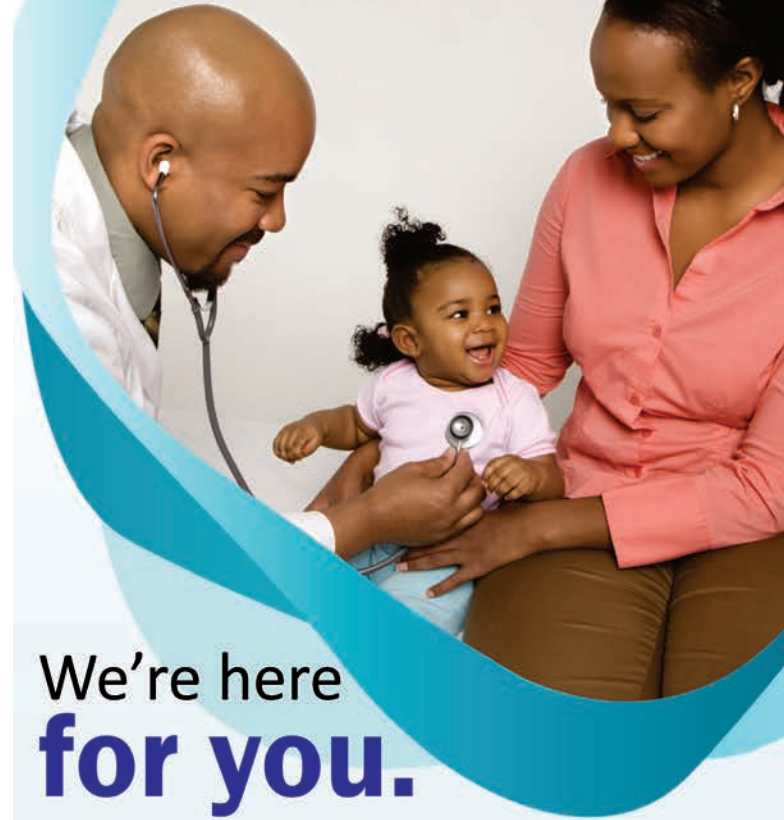


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- 9 Cane Garden Bay
- 10 Apple Bay
- 11 Long Bay, West End
- 12 Smuggler's Cove
- 13 Brandywine Bay

## VIRGIN GORDA

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- 15 The Baths, National Park
- 16 Devil's Bay, National Park
- 17 Spring Bay, National Park
- 18 Mahoe Bay
- 19 Trunk Bay
- 20 Little Dix Bay
- 21 Savannah Bay
- 22 Pond Bay

## JOST VAN DYKE

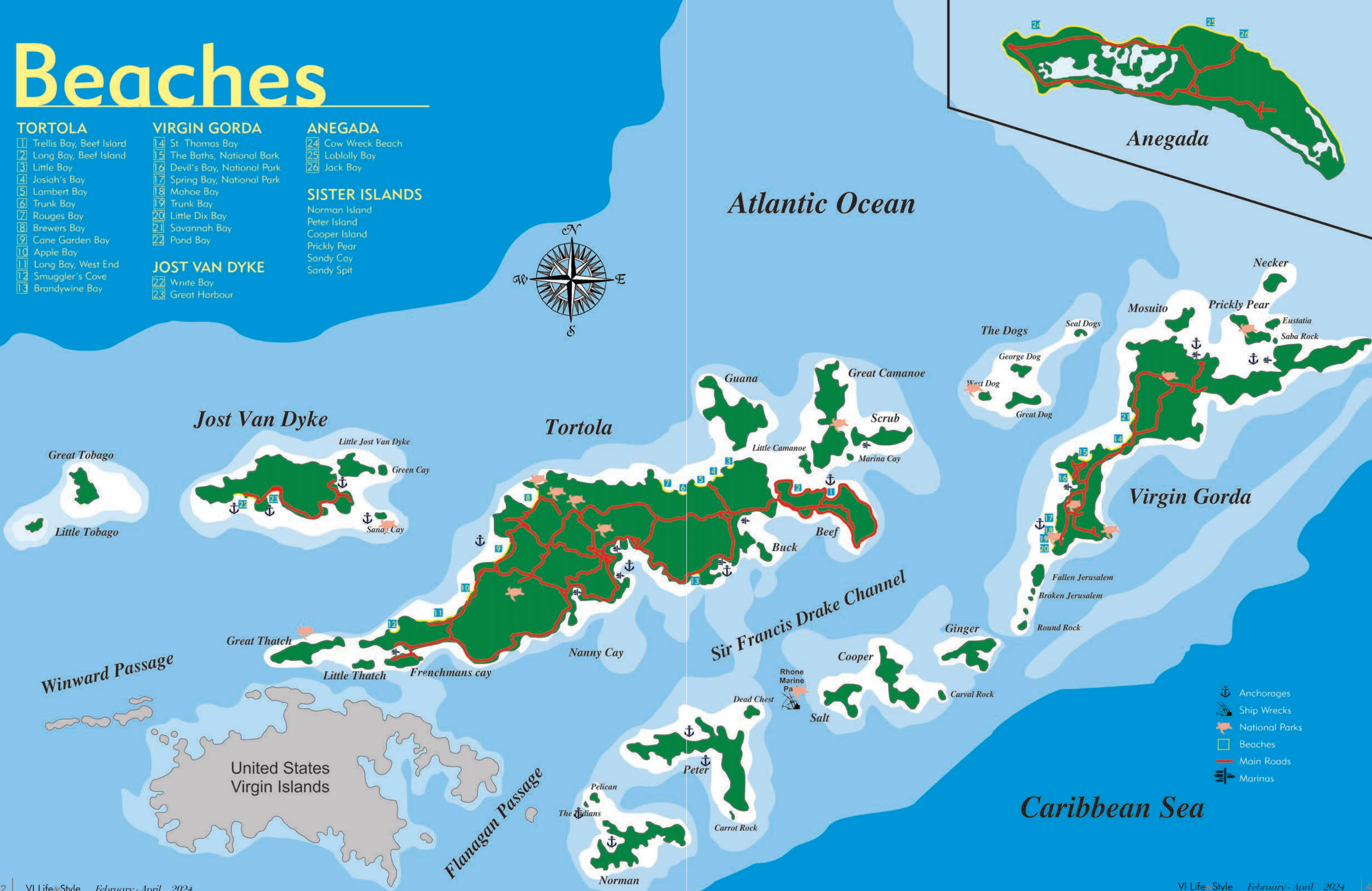
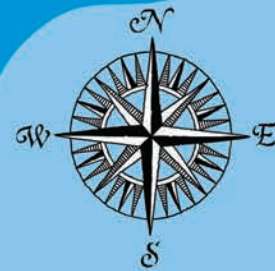
- 22 Write Bay
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## ANEGADA

- 24 Cow Wreck Beach
- 25 Loblolly Bay
- 26 Jack Bay

## SISTER ISLANDS

- Norman Island
- Peter Island
- Cooper Island
- Prickly Pear
- Sandy Cay
- Sandy Spit



- Anchorages
- Ship Wrecks
- National Parks
- Beaches
- Main Roads
- Marinas



## BANKING SERVICES

There are several major banks in the British Virgin Islands: Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, FirstBank Puerto Rico, CIBC-First Caribbean International Bank (Cayman) Limited, National Bank of the Virgin Islands (formerly Development Bank), Republic Bank (British Virgin Islands) Limited and VP Bank (BVI) Limited. Hours vary, but most are open Monday through Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. They all have extended hours on Fridays. Banco Popular opens a teller drive-through window from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays. FirstBank is open Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Most businesses open at 8:30 a.m. and close at 5 p.m. Many merchant stores, including pharmacies, are closed after 1 p.m. on Saturday and all day on Sunday; but a few open if cruise ships are in port. Supermarkets open earlier and close later, and most are open on weekends and holidays. Bobby's Supermarket in Road Town is open from 7 a.m. until midnight every day. Call a specific business for its hours of operation.

## CLIMATE

The islands benefit from the trade winds that keep humidity low, but temperatures rarely go above 95 F or below 75 F. The wettest months are between September and November, coinciding with the height of the hurricane season.

## CREDIT CARDS

Many BVI establishments accept credit cards, generally MasterCard or Visa; some, but not all, take American Express. There is an American Express office at Romney Associates in Road Town. There are several ATM machines on Tortola located in Road Town, Cane Garden Bay, West End and at the Terrance B. Lettsome

International Airport on Beef Island. There are no banks or ATM machines on Virgin Gorda, Anegada, Jost Van Dyke or Peter Island. Please note that there is a 10-cent stamp duty charged on all cheques, including traveller's cheques.

## CURRENCY

U.S. dollar is the only legal tender in the BVI. Major credit cards are accepted in many, but not all, establishments. It's advisable to travel with U.S. traveller's cheques.

## MONEY TRANSFERS

MoneyGram and Western Union provide services to receive and send money worldwide.

## VISITOR REQUIREMENT

Passports are required by all. Return tickets are required for visitors and those coming on work permits.

## DEPARTURE TAX

After you have checked in at the airport or at any sea-port, look for the departure tax window. Every air travel passenger must pay a \$20 departure tax in cash or by Visa or MasterCard (cheques are not accepted). For those leaving by sea, during the second half of 2013 departure tax from sea ports increased to \$20 for visitors and \$15 for residents. Cruise ship passengers pay \$7.

## DIVING AND SAILING

Many diving and yachting companies specialise in helping you take advantage of BVI's excellent diving sites and the fact that it's the Sailing Capital of the World.

## DRUGS

Recreational drugs are strictly forbidden. Their possession, sale, use or distribution is a criminal offence punishable by law. Conviction can lead

to heavy fines and jail sentences.

## ELECTRICITY

Electricity is supplied by the BVI Electricity Corporation. The standard electrical current is 110 volts on all the islands.

## FISHING

Non-British Virgin Islanders need a recreational fishing permit to remove any marine organism from BVI waters. There are closed seasons for harvesting certain species of fish and other seafood. Call the Conservation and Fisheries Division at 494-5681 for information. Recreational fishing permits will be issued at all ports of entry for \$45. A licence is required for every adult on board who will be fishing.

## 2023 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day	Mon. 1st
H. Lavity Stoutt's Birthday	Mon. March 4
In lieu of Thursday 7 th March	
Good Friday	Fri., March 29
Easter Monday	Mon., April 1
Whit Monday	Mon., May 20
Sovereign's Birthday	Fri., June 14
Virgin Islands Day	Tues., July 1
Festival Monday	Mon., August 5
Festival Tuesday	Tues., August 6
Festival Wednesday	Wed., August 7
Heroes' & Forefathers Day	Mon., October 21
Commeration of 1949 March	Mon., Nov. 25
Christmas Day -	Wed., Dec 25
Boxing Day	Thurs., Dec 26

## PETS

Pets are allowed into the Territory only after an import permit is obtained from the Department of Agriculture. For regulations concerning animal importation, contact the Department of Agriculture, Paraquita Bay, Tortola; tel. 495-2532 and fax 495-1269.

## INTERNET

There are several places throughout the islands that offer Internet access. Most have free Wi-Fi and can be found at the following locations: Saba Rock, North Sound, Virgin Gorda; Trellis Bay Market, Beef Island; Lambert Beach Resort, Tortola; Nanny Cay Marina, Tortola; Village Cay Marina, Road Town; Myett's Garden Inn and Grille, Cane Garden Bay; Foxy's, Jost Van Dyke; The Watersports Centre, Jost Van Dyke; Anegada Reef Hotel, Anegada; Big Bamboo, Anegada.

## ISLAND INFORMATION ONLINE

The BVI Tourist Board's website (bvitourism.com) offers printable online information about each island, useful schedules and much more. The BVI Chamber of Commerce & Hotel Association (BVICCHA; bvihotels.org, BVI Government, VI Life&Style magazine, Property and Yacht magazine, two local newspapers also host helpful links to other web-sites belonging to various individual hotels and organisations. You may also want to visit [experiencethebvi.com](http://experiencethebvi.com) for useful information about the islands.

## MEDICAL

Dr. D. Orlando Hospital is the main general hospital in Road Town, Tortola; but health clinics are available at villages on Tortola, Virgin Gorda and other sister islands. There's also a government dental clinic in the hospital in Road Town. Dr. Adamson, Smile Dental, Premier Dental, Dr. Rhymer and B&F Medical Complex, VI Medical - Manual Reef, pro-vided experienced general dental services, whilst Vision Center offers advanced eye care.

## POST OFFICES

The main post office on Blackburne Highway also has a philatelic counter. There are sub post offices on Beef Island (Airport), and West End on Tortola, and on the larger sister islands. Most hotels and resorts offer daily mail pickups. Virgin Islands' stamps are worldwide collectors' items. The BVI Philatelic Society (494-7789) organises an annual stamp exhibition, usually held in the spring, that attracts a wide range of enthusiasts.

## RADIO AND TELEVISION

Local radio stations, most of which are available on-line, include ZBVI (780 AM), ZKING (100.9 FM), ZROD (103.7 FM), ZCCR (94.1 FM), 100.5 Tola Radio and ZVCR (106.9 FM). Local cable channels include 1, 51, 52 and 55. Public service channels include 12 (VVCJX, St. Thomas, USVI) and 25 (BBC World). A few channels broadcast in Spanish, including Channel 4 (Azteca). News and entertainment are also available on cable channels beamed from numerous U.S. cities and satellites.

## SMOKING

Smoking in public places such as restaurants, bars, shopping malls, recreational facilities, offices, public transportation terminals, etc.

is forbidden, in accordance with the Tobacco Products Control Act of the BVI. It's also forbidden to smoke within 50 feet of these public spaces. A person found smoking tobacco in a public place will be subject to a fine. In the BVI, it's illegal to sell cigarettes to persons who are under 18 years old.

## TIPPING

A 7 percent government tax is usually added to your hotel bill, as well as a 10 percent hotel service charge. Additional tipping is optional. It's customary to include a 15 percent tip when dining out. Most restaurants automatically include this on the bill as a service charge.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Air:** Regional airlines connect Beef Island with international hubs (e.g., San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Antigua) and other Carib-bean islands. Small planes fly between Beef Island and Virgin Gorda and St. Thomas, USVI. Charter planes are also available to the outer islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands from the airport on Beef Island.

**Land:** The British Virgin Islands have 150 roads, of which 118 are paved. The two main roads on Tortola are Blackburne Road, which runs along the seashore from the eastern to the western end of the is-land, and Ridge Road, which runs centrally over the hills. Both offer spectacular scenic views of the islands.

**Buses:** Mini and safari bus outings are usually arranged by the hotels and are also available for other extended group trips and scenic sightseeing.

**Car Rentals:** Renting a car is both economical and convenient. There are several agencies offering reasonable rates, unlimited mileage, emergency services and additional insurance. If visiting for more than a month, a temporary licence must be obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles in Pockwood Pond. The cost is \$10. Bring your passport and a valid driver's licence from country of origin. Driving is on the left-hand side of the road.

**Ferry Services:** The main ferry docks on Tortola are in Road Town and at West End. Inter-island boat services operate several times per day between Tortola and several other islands in the BVI (including Marina Cay, Scrub Island Virgin Gorda, Peter Island and Jost Van Dyke) and the USVI (St. Thomas and St. John). Ferry services to Anegada are available daily except on Saturday. Departure and arrival information can be obtained at the front desk of your hotel.

**Taxis:** Taxis are available at the air-port, hotels, taxi stands and other venues throughout the islands. Some hotels have a franchised taxi arrangement for guests or will quickly order a taxi from the front desk. Taxi drivers usually provide running commentaries on local history and other useful information. New government rates are now in effect. It's a good idea to check the fare with your driver in advance.

## TAXI CONTACTS

West End Taxi Association – 284-543-4241  
Nanny Cay Taxi Association – 284-394-2512  
Waterfront Taxi Association – 284-494-4959  
Road Town Taxi Association – 284-494-8755  
Quality Taxi Association – 284-422-0353  
BVI Taxi Association – 284-494-2322  
Moorings Taxi Association – 284-393-2331  
Beef Island Taxi Association – 284-495-1982  
Valley, Virgin Gorda Taxi Association – 284-540-6482

**Taxi Rates** Tortola: A fare for one person from the airport to Slaney is US\$30. A chartered taxi from Road Town to any of the villages can range from \$15 to \$27 for one person depending on the distance, and the regular fare around town is \$5. Farther out to the suburbs is \$6, and the fare from Road Town to West End is \$27. From the cruise ship dock to most beaches, the range is from \$24 to \$27 for one person, but for three or more people the fare ranges from \$8 to \$12 each. Virgin Gorda: From The Valley to The Baths is \$6, and from Gun Creek to the Yacht Harbour is \$30. **Anegada:** From the airport to Loblolly Bay is \$7, whilst to Setting Point is \$14.

**Jost Van Dyke:** One person going from Great Harbour to White Bay pays \$10, and to Bubbly Pool, \$20. Three or more people going to Bubbly Pool pay \$10 each.

**Tours:** A one-hour tour for up to two people is \$55 (fixed rate), whilst for up to three people the cost rises to \$70. A group of five persons is \$100 (each ad-ditional person over the five pays \$15). A two-hour tour starts at \$110 for up to two people. Waiting charges: First 15 minutes are free, but every subsequent block of 15 minutes is \$10. Tour costs are the same for all islands. Children three years or younger travel at no cost, children ages 4-10 pay half fare, and children 11 and over pay the full fare. Between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. there is a sur-charge of 30 percent on all fares. Always dis-cuss the rates with your driver in advance. There is limited bus service running from Road Town to East End. The fare is \$3.

## TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Telephone Numbers  
Ambulance 311  
Fire or Police 311  
Hospital 494-3497  
VISAR 494-4357 (Virgin Island or 767 (SOS) Search & Rescue)  
Airlines  
Air Sunshine 495-8900 Cape Air, Ltd. 495-2100, Fly BVI 495-1747, Island Birds 495-2002  
Seaborne Airlines 340-773-6442

## Other Useful Telephone

BVICCHA - (284) 345-3513  
BVI Red Cross 494-6349  
BVI Tourist Board (284) 494-3134  
CADA (Drug Information)  
Family Support Network (FSN) (284) 540-2085  
Humane Society of Tortola (284) 494-2284  
BVI General Post Office (284) 468-5160  
Medical HOTLINE (284) 852-7650



# taste

A CULINARY SAMPLE OF THE  
VI'S BEST SIPS, SUPS & SNACKS



## MAIN STREET RESTAURANT "BRINGING THE WORLD TO YOUR TABLE"

Initiative, creativity, and spontaneity drive the unique dishes that Main Street Restaurant brings to Road Town on a weekly basis. From oxtail tacos to seafood jambalaya, there's rarely a set menu that customers can expect, and owner Kai de Castro says it's to keep people on their toes.

**By Z Golden**

**T**he menu is designed to keep fresh local ingredients including catch like snapper and tuna, and also to keep it simple and easy. From lasagna to burgers, grilled steak to pizza, customers can find a variety of offerings every day of the week.

It's de Castro's perspective that's helped shape the vision for the restaurant, which opened in August. As a believer, he studied civil engineering in Florida and traveled throughout Europe and the Caribbean to islands like St. Kitts, St. Lucia, and Dominica to

see how the world worked. He came to realize that "every country has its own niche" and its own way about it.

By taking the unique qualities and traits of the Virgin Islands and mixing that with qualities found all over the world, de Castro has painstakingly built Main Street Restaurant.

When you first pass by Main Street Restaurant, it's a bit of a shock: the brightly colored orange exterior complemented by dark wooden shutters and contrasting silver hinges give way to the neatly framed sign with the restaurant's name. Notable is the old-

fashioned post office sign tucked into the logo, bearing "Q II E" for the late Queen Elizabeth II.

It's this historical touch that Kai de Castro has worked so hard to bring to fruition since he first began construction at the site in 2019—and he can pinpoint exactly what inspired him to do it.

"I went to Portugal, and I Googled "the best place in town," and it was this old little vintage breakfast spot somebody's grandma opened," he said. "I went to other places like Belgium, Spain and again, it's the same feeling — they take the town, and they create an





atmosphere.”  
 He took his 100-year-old family property, which was built in 1920, and decided to create something that would withstand the test of time on it.

“I did it because I want to say, ‘Okay, the building has been here for 100 years. I want the restaurant to be here for 100 years,’ he said.

Badly damaged in hurricane Irma in 2017, the process was long and took diligence. It was de Castro’s five-year plan to bring “a little bit of Tortola, a little bit of the BVI, a little Caribbean” to the area.

Walking into the entrance you’ll find an original post office box that used to be found throughout the Virgin Islands, something only sharp-eyed individuals will glimpse remnants of in remote corners of the island. This one’s been done up — its vivid blue paint is something difficult to avoid, whether you’re just strolling by or interested in a bite.

The first of four seating areas is an outdoor patio featuring a calming wall of succulents and greenery. A larger table of six can be seated there comfortably, but smaller and more intimate groups of four or two can also have tables on the patio. A fully stocked open bar also has seating for those who want a cold one and an outdoor ambience closer to the ground. Come upstairs, through the main doors, and an entirely different atmosphere opens up.

Neatly pressed brown tiles frame a well-lit bar area, where waitresses and waiters have an arrangement of spirits and exactly the right

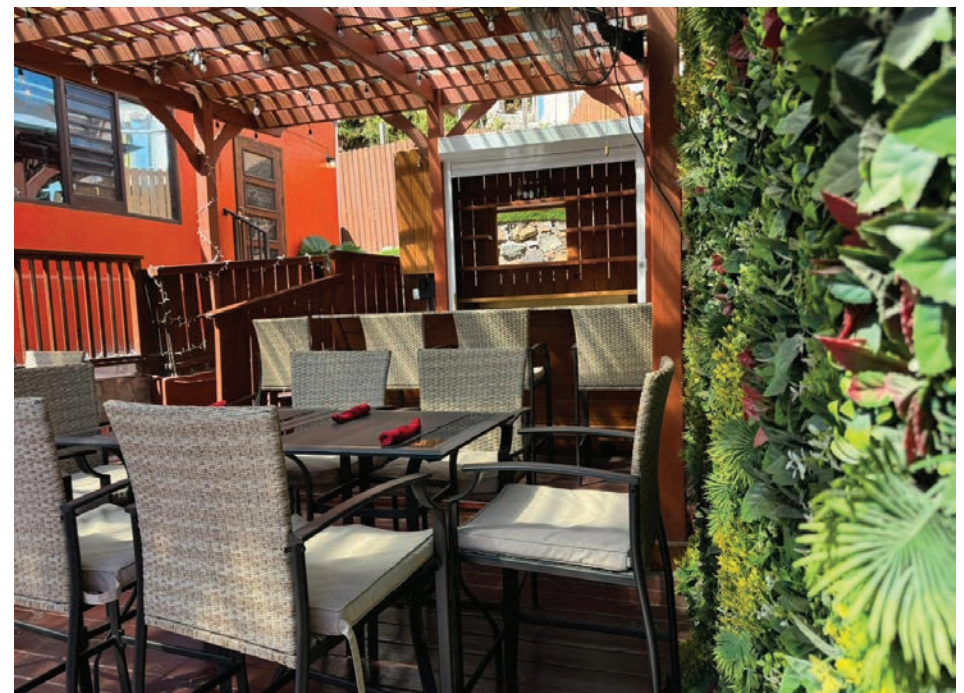


dinnerware to serve them in. Casual music fills the area, where swivel chairs line the bar front and small tables line the walls. Home country pride and heritage are displayed on the walls with license plates, offering a slightly grunge aesthetic in an otherwise elegant environment.

Adjacently, a room filled with high leatherback booths and small tables with leather chairs gives a cozy dinner environment. Crimson red napkins holding silverware are placed at each table, popping up against the neutral brown and black furniture.

Another patio — this one overlooking the street — welcomes the sounds of historic Main Street and views of the colorful buildings around. The patio is filled with highchairs and glass tables.

Patrons come into and out of the establishment, often picking up their lunchtime meals passed through the open bar area.





# top fast-food on island

VI Life&Style magazine is all about community life, hence the slogan Our Life – Our Style – Our Islands, and we love to shine the spotlight on all ages, gender, creed or colour. But when the youngins’ are doing positive things – it is our joy to put them on blast. We have had the privilege for the past ten years of showcasing in each issue our youths and in this issue we shine our spotlight once again on another young entrepreneur Shaq Fonseca and his best burger.



**How did you come up with the name for your business?**

Well when we initially started making burgers at a previous business location; the slogan for the burgers were “the Best Burger in town” and I would answer the phone “Welcome to Best Burger, Home of the Best Burger” and people would always laugh or comment .... So I just ran with that.

**Why did you choose to operate this business, what was your motivation, what is your story?**

Well I was operating the bar at Best Cup on Friday and Saturday nights and with a bar comes a lot of ups and downs; and Akeem Pope, a friend of mine who was deejaying for me at the spot tried to give input and ideas on what he thought we could do to generate customers and have a unique selling point, and he said to me “we only have drinks and music; everybody have that” we need to think on activities. But I always had the idea to make burgers so I slept on the idea of activities and burgers, and I thought “having burgers could really change the dynamic of the business”. It was something the BVI was missing as all the previous people that were making burgers all let their business die and I have always been a big fan of burgers since my high school days; so, I know it would be perfect if I took it under my portfolio.

**What is your full legal name?**

Shaq Fonseca

**Do you go by any aliases or nick names?**

MaDBoi , BEST BURGER

**When was your business founded?**

March 28th 2023

**Do you have any active partners?**

No but I do have persons working towards becoming partners.



**Did you face any challenges in registering the business and with start up?**

I faced many obstacles and challenges; failed attempts at partnerships, very little help with funding, transportation, and time management as I have a son who values my time with him. As far as registering the business, this is my 5th business so that part was easier to maneuver.

**Is this business your sole business venture and revenue earner?**

No this is not my only business venture, but I put all my other businesses on standby for now. I put all my focus and time into making Best Burger a timeless and superior business.

**Where do you see the business 5-10 years down the line?**

In the next 5-10 years I see Best Burger being an international franchise.

**Are there any stumbling blocks that you believe you will encounter as you grow your business?**

Yes there is, but the beauty is in the journey, the beauty is in the struggle, the grind, and the climb. I really enjoy overcoming every obstacle that I am faced with.

**How do you obtain and maintain customers?**

Well at Best Burger we always try to give back to our customers, so we always have promotional activities planned. We try to execute

having the best customer service on the island; and yes, we do have hiccups, but we thrive every day to make the service a little better and it has been working for us so far.

**What other skill sets do you have that you utilize or can utilize to enhance your business offering?**

I have many other skills that all make Best Burger a success: audio engineering, dry walling, marketing, sales, advertising, social skills and I am an artist as well as a designer.

**Where is your business located?**

Tortola Pier Park, Kiosk#12

**How can customers access your business?**

Via: Facebook, Instagram, phone @bestburger

**How can your story influence other youth persons to start their own business ventures?**

Well just last year, I didn't even have a bank account in my name but today we appear to be one of the top fast-food places on the island. "If I can do it, they can do it too". If you discipline yourself and focus on your goals "impossible is nothing".

**LifeStyle** MAGAZINE

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TRELLIS BAY, BVI



Mitch Mandel and Thomas MacDonald

## Espresso Rubbed Flank Steak

Coffee and steak might seem like an unlikely partnership, but the flavor of beef is heightened by the robust flavors of java. This coffee-rubbed steak dish would be perfect with grilled vegetables and a side of raspberry compote. Make sure to let the beef rest, you don't want to cut into it too early, and all the hot juices will bleed out instead of being reabsorbed by the meat.

**NUTRITION:** 270 calories, 15 g fat (6 g saturated), 600 mg sodium  
**SERVES 4**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1/2 Tbsp finely ground coffee or espresso
- 1/2 Tbsp chili powder

- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 lb. flank or skirt steak (Skirt and flank are among our two favorite cuts, but any steak—strip, tenderloin, ribeye—would benefit from this coffee treatment)
- Pico de Gallo
- 1 lime, quartered

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Preheat a grill, grill pan, or cast-iron skillet.
2. Combine the coffee grounds with the chili powder, plus a few generous pinches of salt and pepper.
3. Rub the spice mixture all over the steak. Cook the beef for 3 to 4 minutes per side, depending on thickness, until slightly firm but still yielding.

4. Let the steak rest for at least 5 minutes, then slice thinly against the grain of the meat. Serve with a big scoop of Pico de Gallo and a wedge of lime.

Sometimes unconventional pairings yield surprisingly tasty results. Try any of these combinations as a treat for your taste buds:

- Olive oil and ice cream, with a pinch of coarse sea salt
- Strawberries, balsamic vinegar, and black pepper
- Peanut butter, banana, and bacon between toasted bread (the King would approve of this Elvis sandwich)
- Mango, pineapple, and papaya chunks topped with lime juice and hot sauce



Mitch Mandel and Thomas MacDonald

## Easy Grilled Ratatouille Salad Recipe

**NUTRITION:** 270 calories, 19 g fat (2.5 g saturated), 385 mg sodium  
**SERVES 4**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 large red onion, cut into 1/4"-thick slices
- 1 red bell pepper, quartered, stems and seeds removed
- 1 medium eggplant, cut into 1/4"-thick planks
- 1 large portobello mushroom cap, cut into 1/4"-thick slices
- 1 large zucchini, cut into 1/4"-thick planks

- 2 medium yellow squash, cut into 1/4"-thick planks
- 12–16 asparagus stalks, woody ends removed
- 4 Tbsp olive oil
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 Tbsp prepared pesto
- 2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- 2 Tbsp pine nuts, toasted
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Preheat a grill.

2. Toss the vegetables with 2 tablespoons olive oil and generously season with salt and pepper.

3. Grill the vegetables until cooked through and lightly charred, removing each individually when it has reached this stage. Some vegetables (like the onion and pepper) will take longer than others (like the asparagus and squash).

4. Combine the pesto and vinegar in a small bowl, then slowly drizzle in the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil.

5. Cut the red pepper into thin slices, then toss all of the vegetables with the vinaigrette, pine nuts, and Parmesan.



Mitch Mandel and Thomas MacDonald

## Chili – Peach Baby Back Ribs

Pitmasters can spend 10 hours feeding their smokers to sweat out a few racks of ribs. We admire the dedication, but when it comes to home cooking, there's an easier way to make amazing ribs. It starts in the oven, where spice-rubbed ribs are slow-roasted until tender. From there they go to the grill for a concentrated blast of hickory smoke. Finish with a barbecue sauce spiked with bourbon and peach, and you have a ribs recipe any barbecue baron could respect.

**NUTRITION:** 410 calories, 31 g fat (11 g saturated), 460 mg sodium  
SERVES 6 TO 8

### INGREDIENT:

- 2 medium racks baby back ribs
- 1/2 Tbsp chili powder
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- Salt and black pepper to taste

- 1/2 cup classic barbecue sauce or favorite barbecue sauce
- 2 Tbsp bourbon (optional)
- 1 very ripe peach, peeled and pitted
- 2 cups hickory chips, soaked in water for 30 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 300°F. Rub the top sides of the ribs with the chili powder and brown sugar and season with salt and black pepper.
2. Place the racks on a baking sheet, cover with foil, and bake for 90 minutes, until the meat is tender but not falling completely off the bone.
3. While the ribs cook, combine the barbecue sauce, bourbon (if using), and peach in a food processor or blender and puree.
4. Preheat a grill over medium heat.

5. Place the chips in a wood-chip box (or in a foil packet—see "Kitchen tip" below) and place the box below the grill grate, directly over the flame. (If using charcoal, sprinkle the chips directly over the fire.)

6. Place the ribs on the grill, close the lid, and allow the meat to absorb the smoke for 15 to 20 minutes. Paint the ribs with a generous amount of the barbecue sauce. Close the lid and continue cooking for another 15 minutes, until the sauce caramelizes on the ribs.

7. Remove the ribs and brush once more with the sauce before serving.

### Kitchen Tip:

If a full-size smoker is not available, a wood-chip box holds the chips directly above a gas or charcoal fire as the heat releases their aroma. Make sure to soak the wood chips before adding to the fire; damp chips will smoke more than dry ones.

## Grilled Pineapple with Cream

The banana is the classic sundae go to choice and a great source of potassium too, Pineapple, however, has the perfect matching of sweetness and acidity—which is only intensified when it's grilled and is further sweetened by the sweet cream. The touch of rum and the toasted coconut to this grilled pineapple is like having a piña colada on your plate. Light and refreshing.

**NUTRITION:** 290 calories, 11 g fat (7 g saturated), 35 g sugar  
SERVES 4

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 (1/2"-thick) slices fresh pineapple, core removed
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp dark rum
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cups vanilla ice cream
- 2 Tbsp shredded sweetened coconut, toasted (Toasting the coconut is optional, but highly recommended. To toast, spread on a baking sheet and bake in a 350°F oven for 12 minutes, until golden brown.)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat a grill, grill pan, or large sauté



Mitch Mandel and Thomas MacDonald

pan over medium heat (using a small pat of butter in the sauté pan).

2. Cook the pineapple rings for 3 to 4 minutes per side, until caramelized all over.

3. Cook the butter, brown sugar, rum, and vanilla in a saucepan over low heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar fully melts, and the sauce is a uniform dark brown. Keep warm.

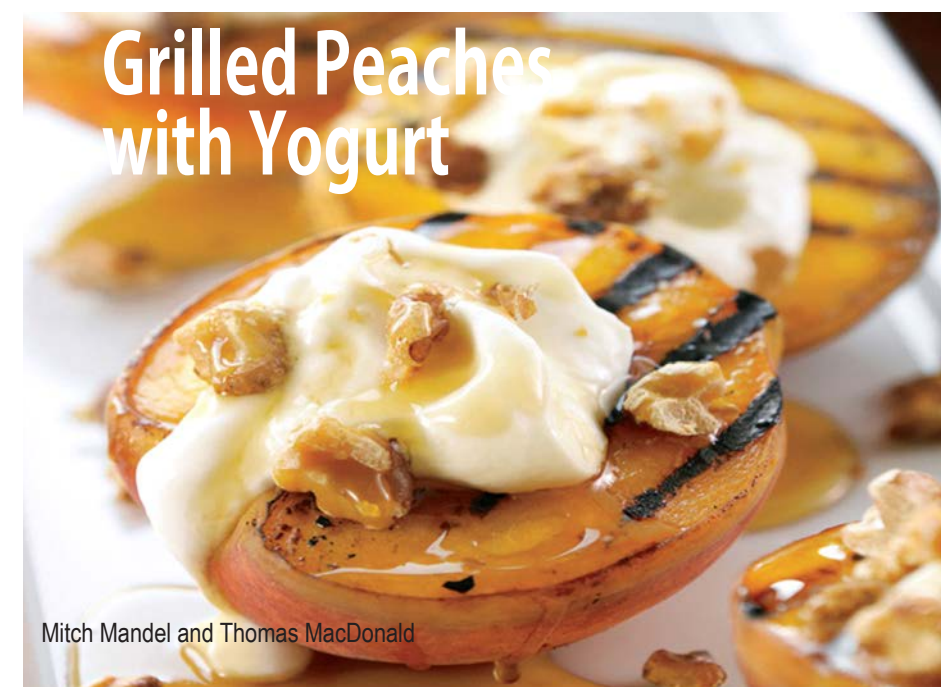
4. Place one slice of pineapple on each of 4 small plates.

5. Top with a scoop of ice cream, drizzle

on the rum sauce, then finish with the toasted coconut.

Pineapples also have great unexpected health benefits as well:

- Anti-inflammatory benefits
- Goof for bone strength
- Immune system support
- Eye health, as well as lessening your risk of macular degeneration, which is an eye disease that can develop in people's eyes as they age.
- Reduces risk of blood clot
- Aids in digestion



Mitch Mandel and Thomas MacDonald

## Grilled Peaches with Yogurt

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 apricots or peaches, halved and pitted
- 2 cups plain Greek-style yogurt (we like Fage 2%)
- 4 Tbsp chopped toasted walnuts (The easiest way to toast nuts is to roast them in a dry pan set over medium heat for about 5 minutes, stirring once or twice as they toast.)
- 4 Tbsp maple syrup (If you don't have real maple syrup, or live near a local farmer's market, you're better off with honey or agave syrup than Aunt Jemima.)

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Heat a grill, stovetop grill pan, or broiler until hot. Cook the fruit until nicely caramelized on the outside, about 5 minutes. The fruit should be softened but still maintain its shape. Top each fruit half with yogurt, walnuts, and maple syrup.



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# BEFORE YOU SAY "I DO" (Part One) *Simple Truths You Should Know*



Dr. Joycelyn D. Hoyte



**M**arriages are under fire, and you don't have to look far or long to recognize that. This fire is destructive, and it seeks to wreak havoc in the lives of many. You might ask, "Who is exempted or immune?". The simple answer is... no one. Divorce comes to professionals, the wealthy, the poor, celebrities, the young, the old, Christians, non-Christians, newlyweds and veteran couples. Executives have led prosperous businesses, presidents and prime ministers have built robust economies; and some pastors have established mega-churches, yet amongst their accolades lies the inability to find similar success in their marriages.

Is there a guarantee that your marriage will survive the epidemic of demise and failure affecting the institution of marriage? In this article, I have outlined guiding principles that if allowed to shape your perspective will take you to and through a lasting, enjoyable and fruitful marriage. Though I cannot capture everything that is required for a long-lasting marriage within the limits of these pages, I can share that if you adopt these principles and build your marriage on them, you will be driving your marriage on the road to success.

**#1 Marriage Needs the Manufacturer's Manual**

When manufacturers design an appliance, they provide instructions and a manual for

effective usage and maintenance. When we do not utilize that product according to the owner's manual, this can result in damage and loss. Marriage, much like your home appliances, has a creator and designer and that creator is God. God has provided us with His Manual (Scripture), His prescription and His Purpose for Marriage and if we are going to experience healthy and successful marriages, we have to live in God's way.

To try and discredit what I have said, many have said that the Bible has no examples of a perfect marriage or a model of the same. I would petition that those persons look again. The Bible portrays the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Church as the ultimate model that every marriage should seek to emulate (Ephesians 5: 22-33). When Christian marriages fail, it is not God who has failed, but us. We have to live our marriages God's way. The Bible is loaded with principles about finances, love, forgiveness, trust, children, sexual intimacy, unity and communication; all essential principles that can bring us marital peace and contentment. When we choose to live our marriage by our feelings, trendy patterns, ungodly standards, or man's opinion we are deviating from God's way. We must go to the scripture, see what the Designer of

Marriage has said and strive to bring our lives in obedience to His principles.

**#2 Marriage requires preparation**

A sad indictment facing marriages is that we spend more time and money focusing on the ceremony rather than on the marriage. The ceremony lasts a few hours but the marriage is for a lifetime. Whether the ceremony is simple or elaborate, costly or cheap, beautiful or bland, some measure of preparation precedes a wedding ceremony. Before you say "I do" prepare yourself mentally. Recognize the serious commitment you are about to make. Marriage is for the mature. Are you ready to leave your single life? Do you know how to control your temper, how to love and care for someone, and how to communicate effectively? Are you ready to leave selfishness behind? because marriage is not about "me" it is about "us".

Prepare yourself financially. Husbands, are you ready to assume the financial responsibility of providing for a family? Do you have a legal source of income to provide for the needs of your family Do you know where you will live

and how you will manage debt? What are your short and long-term, financial goals? If you don't have discipline in your spending, you can drive your family to poverty. This is why it is wise that before you get married, you invest in premarital, biblically-based counsel that gives you an accurate view of the expectations and obligations of marriage.

Prepare yourself emotionally. The scripture teaches that a man shall leave his father and his mother (Genesis 2:24). If you are not ready to cut strings with your maternal home, then do not try to establish your home. When you get married, you have to be prepared to prize your spouse before your parents. This is in no way suggesting that you neglect your family. This is just God's order for the unity that a new couple needs. If your parents' opinion is more important to you than that of your spouse, then you are not ready to leave home.

**#3 Marriage should be seen as Permanent**

Do not go into marriage with divorce as an option. What you see is what you will get. Thinking and speaking about divorce will weaken your strength to consistently and diligently work on resolving the issues that may affect your marriage. Do not see your marriage like a suit of clothes that you throw off and change due to wear and tear. You have to see your marriage as a valuable treasure that you have found, a treasure so priceless that you must protect it from every thief so that you will not lose it.

Divorce has become a trivial matter in society because it has touched the lives of many, this is not God's plan or design for marriage (Malachi 2:16, Luke 16:18, Matthew 19:8-9). Develop a long-term vision for your marriage, think about your first, 10th and 25th anniversary, and think about growing old together. This drives you to keep thriving, bonding and working on the challenges that can erode the peace, stability and quality of your marriage.

**#4 Marriage requires Fidelity**

In the traditional marriage vows it states "keeping you only unto me so long as we both shall live". We repeat the vows so quickly to hustle to the honeymoon that we do not pay attention to the commitment we are making. The only third person you need in your marriage is God. Keep every other person from being an interference in your relationship. When you get married, keep your eyes and your hands on your spouse only. Unfaithfulness and infidelity are among the leading enemies of marriage. Stop the flirting, spending excessive time with persons outside your spouse, the inappropriate conversations, the secret phone numbers, the receiving and giving of gifts and a host of other deadly traps that lure couples into infidelity. When you say, "I do" let it be "I done". You are done with looking, done with cheating, done with adultery, done with lying and done with "running around" because you are now settled down to live with your spouse faithfully for the rest of your life.

All in all, when it comes to marriage you must be willing to put in the work. Many envision a fairytale, but fairytales are just that... fairytales. Marriage is real. You will have to face real challenges and do real work to maintain love, trust and romance. As you step into your marital union, you must ground your marriage on the Word of God. You and your partner must prepare for the intricacies of married life. You must condition your mind to view your marriage as permanent and you must continue to be faithful to your partner. Ensure that these principles are guiding you before you say, "I do".

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# 12 Gifts to Give Yourself in 2024

When I was a little girl, I couldn't wait for Christmas morning to see what gifts were waiting for me under the tree. To this day, I still look back at pictures of little me and can't help but smile when I see that gleam in my eyes.

By Marva Titley-Smith

Now, that I'm older, I find myself looking to my children for their sense of wonder and excitement. But what if, we could carry the joy of Christmas and gift-giving throughout the year? What if instead of giving gifts to others, we give gifts to ourselves but not in a selfish way? What if the gifts we give are intangible, yet truly meaningful gifts, that have the power to transform us from the inside out? Well, wonder no more. This year

we'll do something different, and we don't even have to wait until Christmas. Let's give ourselves gifts that keep on giving, starting right now. Are you ready? Here goes!

## 1. The Gift of Connecting with Nature:

Spend time outdoors, connecting with nature to rejuvenate and find peace. With

generally good weather year-round, we have every reason to get outside and enjoy all the BVI has to offer. Maybe this year, you'll go on more beach outings or finally join that hiking crew you've been seeing on Facebook. Whatever you choose, I'm sure more time outdoors will be good for your soul.

## 2. The Gift of Learning and Growth:

Cultivate a thirst for knowledge, whether through books, courses, or experiences, to stimulate personal growth. Is there something you always wanted to learn? Nowadays with so many options available to us online, it's easier than ever to learn new skills or start a new hobby. Begin by doing a little research and you might even find courses that you can do for free. In 2024, there really is no excuse for not developing yourself, so take the bull by the horns and get started.

## 3. The Gift of Gratitude:

Gratitude comes from the Latin word 'gratia', meaning grace, graciousness or gratefulness. It is a thankful appreciation for what one receives, whether tangible or intangible. And believe it or not, gratitude is linked to happiness. According to a 2021 Harvard Medical School article, "gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships." (Giving Thanks Can Make You Happier, 2021) So, if you're hoping for more happiness in 2024, gratitude is the way to go. Start by dedicating time to reflect on things you're grateful for each day. Also consider simple acts such as praying, counting your blessings, or keeping a gratitude journal. Even thanking someone mentally counts as well.

## 4. The Gift of Self-Compassion:

For many driven and goal-oriented individuals, it's easy and maybe even natural to be hard on themselves. This year however, it's time to try something new. Treat yourself with kindness and understanding, embracing imperfections, and celebrating self-growth.

**5. The Gift of Mindfulness:**  
Incorporate mindfulness into your daily life through meditation, silence, deep breathing, or simply being present in the moment. This simple gift will help you slow down and appreciate life more.

## 6. The Gift of Cultivating Relationships:

Nourish and invest time in relationships that bring positivity and support into your life. Perhaps you already have these types of relationships, if so, you'll want to nurture them. If not, seek them out. You can start by connecting with people with similar goals or interests. Consider joining a book club, the local Toastmasters or commit to the regular game night in town. Find new ways to connect with new people and you just might be surprised the friendships you develop.

## 7. The Gift of Boundaries:

Learn to set healthy boundaries to protect your well-being and maintain balance in your life. Do you have friends who are constantly draining your energy? Adult children who continually sponge off mom or dad? Perhaps this is the year to draw the line of loving boundaries. Instead of feeling guilty, consider that boundaries are there to protect both you and the other party, so look at it as a gift for you and them.

## 8. The Gift of Forgiveness:

If there's one thing that will hold you back more than anything else, it's a lack of forgiveness. I'm sure you've heard it said that forgiveness isn't for the other person, it's for you. That saying is so true. Unforgiveness is like a burden no one wants to carry yet very few choose to let go. Let this be the year you decide to let go of grudges and practice forgiveness, freeing yourself from the heaviness of negative emotions and old hurts. You'll be pleasantly surprised how freeing it is to let go and leave that stuff in the past.

## 9. The Gift of Healthy Habits:

Prioritize your physical health through

regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and adequate sleep. Let's face it, none of us are getting any younger, but if you ever wanted to beat the clock, taking care of yourself is the way to do it. Even if you can't buy yourself more time, you'll probably experience more energy than you had before, and that's almost like getting a new lease on life. It won't happen overnight but taking care of your body is worth it.

## 10. The Gift of Volunteer Work:

One of the best ways to find fulfillment is by giving to others and what better way to do that than by giving back to your community. Engage in volunteering or community service to contribute positively to society and foster a sense of purpose. Those you serve will benefit from your service and so will you. It's a true win-win situation.

## 11. The Gift of Presence:

Few things are worse than distracted living, yet in this modern age it's so easy to fall into that trap. Counteract this by being fully present in each moment, savoring experiences and relationships without distractions. When in conversation with someone, put away your phone. Simple little practices like that can make a big difference.

## 12. The Gift of Celebration

Avoid the temptation of running from one achievement to the next. Taking time to acknowledge and celebrate even the smallest victories and achievements, will foster a sense of accomplishment and motivation.

Of all the gifts mentioned above, which gift are you most excited to give yourself? Start there this month. Then each month choose another gift to unpack. That way, you'll keep on giving throughout the year and your best self will thank you.

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**Marva Titley-Smith,**  
CMgr FCMi CCM

Marva is a work and life strategist with a passion for helping women thrive in all areas of life. She's the BVI's first local female architect and former Chief Planner. In 2012, after 26 years in the Public Service, she successfully transitioned careers and founded the management consulting firm, MatrixSpark, specializing in strategic management, training, and coaching. She later became certified as a life breakthrough coach to address the growing work-life balance challenges facing women. Marva is the author of the best-selling book, *Time to Thrive: A Busy Woman's Devotional Journal*. You can find her writing about work-life balance and intentional living on her website [www.MarvaSmith.com](http://www.MarvaSmith.com).



# LIVE IN HOPE



**Rev. Michael U. Anthony**  
is the Eastern Caribbean District  
Superintendent of Apostolic Faith Churches  
Author and Business Owner

**H**ere we are again, and the most asked question is "How did we get here so soon?" "Where has the year gone?" The only things that get new each year are the memories, especially for those whom we loved and have now gone to the great beyond. Not forgetting the new aches and pains, oh yes, each passing year brings the deterioration of the body, but there's a scripture that addresses that reality. 2 Corinthians 4:16 Amplified Bible tells us "Therefore we do not become discouraged [spiritless, disappointed, or afraid]. Though our outer self is [progressively] wasting away, yet our inner self is being [progressively] renewed day by day."

Truth be told, at the turn of the year, we are generally in a state of 'flux'. Last year I described it as nostalgia. This is usually because we reflect on (hope, triumphs, failures, pains, joy, sadness and unfinished

matters) all at the same time, while looking forward and planning for (always better) in the new year. We are not (humanly) designed to operate in this manner, hence a state of 'flux' ensues, especially if we have lost someone dear.

If the editor permits, I will briefly mention three persons (of blessed memory) with whom I had the distinct pleasure of serving on the Teaching Service Commission of the British Virgin Islands. All of them were long-standing, hugely impactful educators and so much more. On August 6th, 2022 we lost Kirilin Connor-Lettsome. On October 5th, 2023 we lost Jennie N. Wheatley MBE. On November 24th, 2023 we lost Dr. Lydia Hodge-Pickering. The loss of these giantesses cannot be overestimated. Since this is a 'Faith' article it is appropriate to mention they were all given final rites in the Methodist Church where they no doubt worshipped the King of Kings, Jesus.

Isaiah 57:1-2 Amplified Bible says "The righteous man perishes [at the hand of evil], and no one takes it to heart; Faithful and devout men are taken away, while no one understands that the righteous person is taken away [to be spared] from the disaster and evil. He enters into peace [through death]; They rest in their bed (graves), each one who walked uprightly [following God's will, living with integrity]." The essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that those who die in the Lord are eternally BEST OFF!

2024 is upon us! It's a Leap Year! For all the beliefs and fancies about leap years, it remains an opportunity to reset, refocus and renew our faith, hopes, dreams and relationships with each other and of course, with God.

There is a saying that prayer is the one thing that goes to the future and waits for you. A popular New Year declaration is "Lord let all of my disappointments, become

divine appointments...in Jesus' Name".

For some couples, this is the time they seal their relationship in marriage. May those nuptials be forever blessed by the Christ of Christmas. For some, it is simply a time to slow down and unwind. For many, it is the family gatherings, church activities, community celebrations and spreading seasonal joy. And yes for some, a time of loneliness and melancholy. Whatever your experience, likely not mentioned here, may you live with the hope of a brighter tomorrow.

There is no way for us to know the future (in fact a preview might be too scary), however, we can all live in faith and hope. These two intangible qualities are freely available to all. Our Eternal Father in His infinite wisdom made certain qualities equally accessible to all of us. Love and forgiveness are another two such qualities. If we endeavour to apply such qualities to our daily pursuits, then our

qualification for eternal peace in God rises much higher and our fellowman enjoys the richness of peaceful relations with us. All things considered, that's what the essence of life should be, enjoying it with each other.

Why hope? Because the state in which you began 2023 may not be the state in which you begin 2024, it is either better or worse off. However, living in hope engages that inner strength that it can be better, not worse, and it can increase if already better. There are no negatives in hope because it is a word of progress no matter the circumstance.

A word to remember for 2024. Psalm 119:116 Amplified Bible "Uphold me according to Your word [of promise], so that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope [in Your great goodness]."

I encourage you to also read Romans 5:1-5. Pray without ceasing, it works. Happy, Blessed and Successful 2024. LIVE IN HOPE!

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# Interior Design Solutions for common household habits

By: Kezia Allen

Life's rhythm dances to the beats of routine and habit, forming the groovy core of our existence. While we may fantasize about being wild, carefree spirits, most of us find ourselves following the lively tunes set by work, family, and the call of the pillow. Creatures of habit, we are, but not every groove is a healthy jam! At home, some lazy moves can turn our space into a messy party pooper. From forgetting to kick off your shoes at the door to spoiling the pup with one too many toys, here are a few examples of common party fouls and some recommended solutions to keep your home environment tidy.

## 1. SHOE CHAOS

So, instead of kicking off your shoes right at the front door, you somehow find yourself wandering around the house with those dirty soles before getting around to taking them off. Try keeping a pair of indoor slippers handy near your shoe spot – this makes the switch a breeze! But let's not create a big pile of shoes at the front door. If you're dreaming up a new

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home or sprucing up the current one, think about adding a mud closet or room for your shoes – it's like VIP treatment for your shoes, nudging you to kick them off pronto. And if that's a bit much, a cool rack or a simple basket by the front door does the trick too!

## 2. A LIVELY MOUND OF CLOTHES

From throwing your blazer over the sofa to shedding your clothes on the bedroom floor, dumping clothes makes a big mess – fast. Ensure that anything you remove finds its place on a peg, in a drawer, or within the confines of a wardrobe or laundry basket. Get creative with wall-mounted hooks on the back of a closet door, walls, or inside a closet just for these items. Eliminate any enticing dumping zones, like a chair in the bedroom,

or leaving the ironing board out which may inadvertently transform into a prolonged repository for disorganized clothing. For those "not-so-dirty" clothes, try a chic decorative hamper. This will keep things neat in one spot and out of sight.

## 3. ACCUMULATION PARTY

For those enchanted by handy appliances, novels, or captivated by knick-knacks, you might hit a tipping point in your collection journey. It could result in a cluttered home weighed down by an excess of stuff.

Embark on a decluttering mission by categorizing items into piles for charity, storage, yard sale, or disposal. Consider curbing your collecting habit, or schedule annual clear-outs. To determine what stays, ponder the last time you used each item. If parting with precious pieces is challenging, opt for a creative way to display them. Take inspiration from this expansive shelving unit, crammed with books, yet maintaining a tidy appearance through clever color coordination. Apply the same concept to figurine collections and other items for an aesthetically pleasing display.



4

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DOMINATING COUNTERTOP  
APPLIANCES**

For enthusiasts of kitchen gadgets, your cherished devices are most likely dominating your countertop. With the continuous emergence of new technology, the temptation to acquire the latest fad is hard to resist. Explore these suggestions to declutter and create more space on your countertops.

If you've already completed your recommended annual clear-out and found more cupboard space, here's an organization hack for you. Prioritize your essentials, like the coffee maker or toaster, ensuring easy access. Store less frequently used items, such as the cake mixer or juicer, in cabinets or drawers. Arrange your cupboards by separating frequently used items from seasonal or occasional appliances. If cupboard space is scarce, think about incorporating floating shelves or a countertop organizer to free up work surfaces. To avoid overwhelming your space with appliances, consider opting for multifunctional ones. Balancing functionality and aesthetics is crucial for maintaining a neat and efficient kitchen space.



5

In the realm of interior design, addressing common house habits through innovative solutions proves instrumental in transforming living spaces into harmonious sanctuaries. These strategies not only elevate functionality but also contribute to the overall aesthetic appeal. With these quick and easy solutions, your home can evolve to better align with your lifestyle, ensuring that each space becomes a personalized haven for relaxation and inspiration.

As you try out these design solutions, we'd love to hear about your space transformation! Share your tales of decluttered countertops and improved spaces. And if you're feeling a bit overwhelmed or just want a touch of magic in your home, give us a call at 1.284.499.2060 and ask for more information about our organising services. You may also email us at [formstudiosintl@gmail.com](mailto:formstudiosintl@gmail.com). Your home's next adventure awaits!

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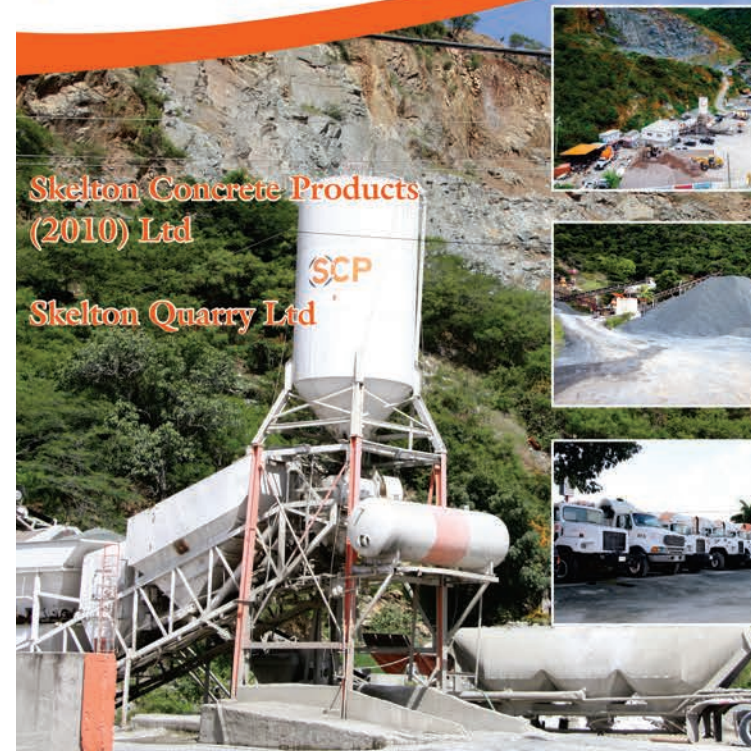


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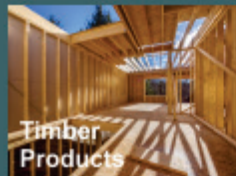


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