

LIFE & STYLE

VIRGIN ISLANDS

OUR LIFE - OUR ISLANDS MAGAZINE

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VICON AWARDS
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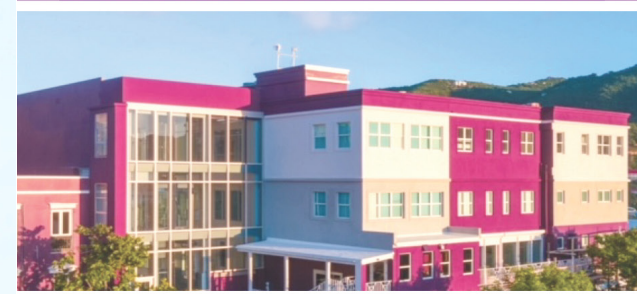
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Virgin Islands Life&Style magazine offers a true reflection of the people, places, events, issues, and concerns that shape Our Lives, Our Style, Our Islands. The magazine informs, challenges, delights and inspires the people who live, work, and play in our islands. We give our readers relevant and compelling content, and present it in an attractive format. Every great country has a magazine that showcases its people, spotlights its culture, and tell its stories – we are Virgin Island's.

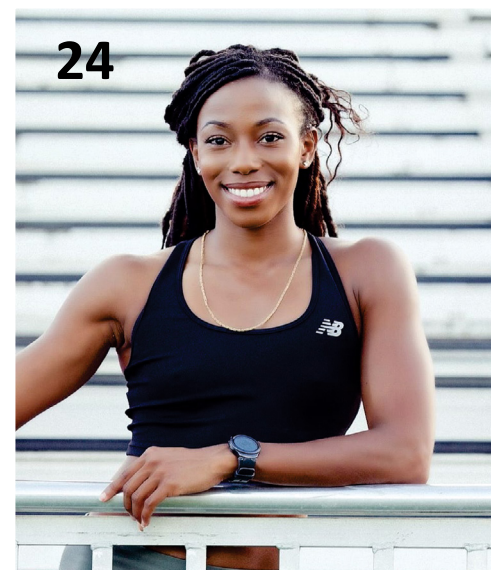


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THE COVER

MODEL: Sandra Potter

VI Icon Awards winner

Photograph: Dame Peters



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THE BIG PICTURE

TIS' SURFING SEASON

Surfing it up on Apple Bay Beach - Tortola

Photo by Elton Callwood



SANDRA POTTER

What inspired you to pursue a career in broadcasting?

Broadcasting was offered as a choice for job training when I was in high school, and I was selected to train at ZBVI for the 2-week period. After graduation from high school, I actually went to work at the Ministry of Health, BVI Government. Then in 1985, Mr. Merritt Herbert (of blessed memory) visited me at my workplace to invite me to come work for him at the station...and I did in late 1985.

Can you tell us about your first job in the industry and what it was like?

My tenure began as assistant to then Office Manager, Mrs. Jacqueline Vanterpool of Virgin Gorda. When she retired, I took her place. So my primary role in radio has been in administration.

What are some of the most memorable moments you've covered over the years?

My role has never really been as an on-air personality or talent, but I have maintained a low key on air presence, and I've presented a number of programs over the years.

You were recognized for the programme "The Almanac" which has been a mainstay in the community for over 30+ years, what were some of the lessons learnt from Erasmus and how did you incorporate them into your style once you were at the helm?

After Erasmus returned to his home country in January 1990, I became (in his words), the most obvious choice for continuing the Almanac, a program of general information. I maintained his particular approach for quite a few years, but gradually began to adopt my own by incorporating different facets such as a quote of the day, word of day etc into the program. Also the topics began to evolve and grow to encompass matters that impact people in every sphere of life. In my view, there is NO topic that is off-limits.

How has your style or approach to broadcasting evolved over the years?

Over the years, I've always tried to ensure that everything I did in radio served to inspire, to teach and to reach (the inner man)

What skills have you found most valuable in your career?

As the Operations Manager responsible for day to day operations, I find patience and understanding in dealing with staff and the general public to be very pivotal to being successful in this field.

What does receiving the VI Iconic Award mean to you personally and professionally?

Personally, I find it to be a tremendous honor. Obviously, over the years I have had many, many people reach out to commend me for a particular feature that they found useful in dealing with an issue they may have been facing, and that was the only 'accolade' I needed. However, to be publicly honored with a VI Icon award does carry a sweet savor, and I am humbled that within the category that I was nominated, this program was selected as the top in its field. Professionally, it says to me that my efforts at producing this program over the years has been impactful on a far greater scale than I realized, and I am very honored to have been selected.

Are there any particular accomplishments or projects you're especially proud of?

I'm very proud of all the programs I present on ZBVI inclusive of the Knowledge is Power Hour, which I have been hosting since 1985, the Almanac of course, Today in Virgin Islands History, along with many seasonal programs. The program which I find to give me greatest joy and a sense of accomplishment is A Moment of Grace, which I started a short while after the death of both my parents within a week of each other, in 2018. It started as a tribute to my parents and as a personal reminder that 'When the Roll is Called Up Yonder', I want to be there so I can see them again. Since then, it was evolved and has become a beacon of inspiration and hope to listeners, and for this I am happy that the Lord is using me in this manner.

How do you think your work has influenced your audience and the broadcasting community?

Well, I go by what people tell me, and I am gratified by the many wonderful comments and words of encouragement received from various persons over the years, on how my work in radio has and continues to impact them. Persons such as Father David Stedman, Ms. Linell Abbott (and so many others), have served as great sources of encouragement to me, for which I am grateful.

Can you share any stories of how your work has made

a difference in someone's life?

I am pretty sure there is a story or two that I've been told, but I'm not recalling the details right at this moment.

What advice would you give to someone starting out in broadcasting today?

Learn from the people around you, those who have been in the field for a longer period of time. Listen to their greatest successes and biggest challenges, and tailor your own journey to navigate these, while forging your own path. Persons such as my late boss, Merritt Herbert, Erasmus Williams, Jacqueline Vanterpool, Dave Douglas, my namesakes Sandra Walters Malone and Sandra Ward (for whom I've been mistaken a time or two, and quite the honor), Walwyn Brewley, Dwight Pickering have all served as a great source of inspiration for me.

Are there any key lessons you've learned that you think are important for others in the industry to know?

Mediocrity has no place in radio (or any profession) for that matter. When you open a mic to deliver anything to an audience, be knowledgeable, be professional, be believable and be good...do your best in every endeavor.

What are your plans for the future? Do you have any new projects or goals you're working on?

Not especially, but as the spirit leads, I will follow.

How do you see the future of broadcasting evolving, and what role do you hope to play in it?

I recall doing a feature on the Almanac a couple decades ago about 'the Information Super Highway', which is now 'the internet'. Back



Photo by Dames Peters

then, what was projected sounded quite ambitious, but we have seen it all come to pass. There's nothing that cannot be done or sourced on the internet. Radio however, still continues to play a pivotal role in this community, and ZBVI continues to rise to the challenge to maintain its position as the heart and soul of this community.

How do you balance your professional life with personal life, especially with such a demanding career?

When my children were young and in school, it was difficult trying to juggle the role of Operations Manager (always on call), and being a mother. But I was able to do it, and no one is the worse for it, so I'm grateful.

Who have been your biggest supporters and influences throughout your career?

There are many who I won't attempt to name for fear of forgetting someone. But I am thankful for their support and encouragement through the years. I could not fail however to mention my mentor, the late Merritt Herbert. He is the one who invited me into this field, who, in a manner of speaking, helped to curate this career for me... and I have always been gratified that there has never been a day I 'hated' the thought of coming to work, because I love what I do!

How would you like to be remembered in the world of broadcasting?

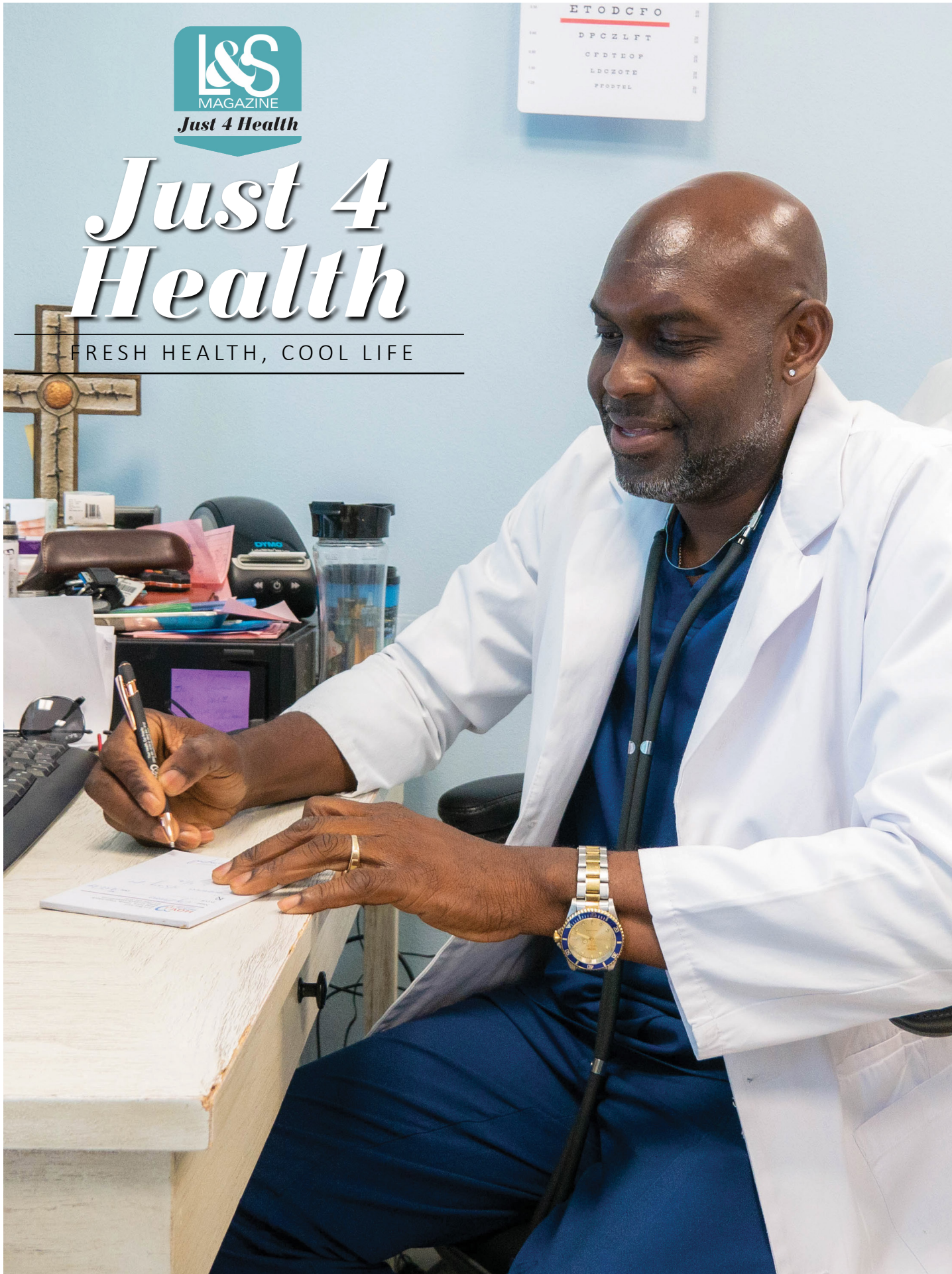
Impactful. Simply that...impactful, and one who made a difference.

What impact do you hope your work will have on future generations of broadcasters?

There's that word again, 'impact'. The young persons of today tend to gravitate toward the internet for their entertainment, information and the like. I would say to any young person contemplating a career in broadcasting...it will change your life. You will have the opportunity to reach so many persons all at once, and you too can make a difference in your community.

Just 4 Health

FRESH HEALTH, COOL LIFE



L-R: Dr. Harlan Vanterpool, Robertine Vanterpool and Tashema Charwell

Your Health, Our Priority

Words by Keneil Anderson - Photos by RaeVaughn Callwood

What does it take to own and operate a medical facility?

It takes grit, willpower, lots of experience and qualification as well as patience and a passion for medicine. This perfectly sums up Dr. Harlan Vanterpool, owner of H.O.V Medical.

What is H.O.V Medical

Currently, the facilities offers primary medical services with the hope of an expansion into wellness and an increase in medical offerings. Some of the current offerings include preventative screenings, annual physicals, medicals for employment

and immigration, sports medicine, and sports-related physicals as well as executive physicals. An executive physical is a very comprehensive yearly physical that goes beyond standard physical check-ups that aim to identify health problems well before symptoms occur.

In addition, H.O.V Medical offers concierge service, which is a doctor on retainer, home visits, as well as some specialist medical consultations via telemedicine. Nonetheless, with an expansion planned soon, Dr. Vanterpool hopes to add more specialists to H.O.V Medical.

With the goal of the middle of next year being the timeline for full expansion into

H.O.V Medical and Wellness Centre, Dr. Vanterpool is already fast-tracking some services into his current practice. The medical doctor noted that in the next couple of months, foot care, sports injury and pain management will be added to his scope of services.

As for the wellness services, he plans to incorporate these to complete his medical practice, as he believes that optimum health cannot be achieved without being well. Health and Wellness go hand in hand Dr. Vanterpool said, "We are going to look specifically at nutrition and exercise as an intricate part of health and wellness and support our clients to achieve their health



time. I was planning to go back to school and further my environmental health career. However, I had developed a strong interest in medicine by that time, due to my exposure and so I decided to challenge myself. As faith would have it, I was accepted to medical and engineering schools just one week apart. So, I had a decision to make. I decided to take on the greater challenge in my mind and here we are," Dr. Vanterpool said.

He eventually graduated from the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago with a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (M.B.B.S) in 2010. Following his graduation, Dr. Vanterpool returned to Tortola where he worked at Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital for five years and then transitioned into the Medical Director for National Health Insurance (NHI), a post he held for seven years. He officially retired in June of this year and transitioned into his practice full-time shortly after.

H.O.V Medical was established in 2020



by Dr. Vanterpool and his wife Robertine. Dr. Vanterpool said his decision to begin his medical practice comes from his desire to practice what he preaches and empower persons to take charge of their health and well-being.

"My desire is to see all persons live their healthiest and most productive life."

How does H.O.V Medical Stand Out?

Despite there being several private medical

practices scattered across the Virgin Islands, Dr. Vanterpool believes his practice stands out because his patients' care is at the top of his priority. He noted that making his patients as comfortable as possible fosters open conversations about their health and forges bonds of trust which are critical in offering the best medical service possible.

"I am not just interested in what their blood pressure is, but how they are coping, how they are managing their health situation and how they are improving. That is my focus, when I see patients and when I interact with people who come to me for service. That service entails ensuring that their health and overall wellness is taken care of properly."

At H.O.V Medical on building our relationships with our clients so that they continuously feel that they are well served. Therefore, when persons hear of H.O.V Medical, they should remember its "Your Health but Our Priority."



targets and goals. The practice of functional medicine is rapidly gaining popularity in the medical world, and he intends to include such in the service offerings for H.O.V Medical.

The Journey To H.O.V Medical

For many, the journey into medicine and being a medical doctor usually begins from an early age at different career levels. However,

according to Dr. Vanterpool, his journey in healthcare has taken an unorthodox path. He started his health career as a Public Health Officer in the Environmental Health Division at the Ministry of Health and Social Development. He was a trainee for two years before going on to become a fully certified Environmental Health and Safety Specialist; by earning his Bachelor's in Environmental Health and Safety Management.

Working with the Ministry of Health put him in a position where he regularly interacted with doctors in the public health clinics. From these interactions, an interest in the practice of medicine was incubated, and the rest is history.

"I always like to share the story of how I ended up doing medicine. I actually applied to medical school on a whim, as I was split between two strong considerations at the

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As we navigate our paths toward better health and well-being, we often overlook how much of that power resides within us. Too frequently, we become passive, letting life simply "happen" rather than taking control. Xa'v shares his inspiring perspective on how to not only improve your health but also take charge of your life's direction. Here is his message:

“Fail more, fail often, fail so much that it sickens! When you're tired of failing, fail some more till there is an insatiable hunger to win! That hunger will fuel the fire of your desire and transform into your energy source. Anger. Anger because you haven't achieved your goals and everyone else has. Anger because you know your life is more than mediocrity. Anger because you are the one who's sabotaging yourself and wasting your untapped potential. So, what are you going to do? Continue to let it happen? Be like the majority and settle for the modest life? Or are you going to break the cycle and be the first one in your generation to do the impossible, become the first millionaire, the first pro athlete, the first movie star!”

I was watching my usual YouTube motivational speeches when part came on and made me pause. I sat in silence for thirty (30) minutes, as I scanned my room, reflecting on my life. The truth is, I knew which habits needed to be broken, the friends I needed to spend less time with and actions needed to be taken. We know what we are supposed to do, but how many of us actually get up and start? "But I'm tired." "Life is so hard right now." "I need more money to start that business." "I'm not



qualified enough to apply." These are excuses I used; a projection of my fears. I often lean on the crutch of excuses whenever I can, because the False Evidence Appearing Real is easier to cope with, than admitting I am undisciplined and scared to take a chance on myself.

You're going to face challenges and setbacks in your life, just be ready for them. Prepare your mind and body for life's hardships, by shifting your mindset to that of positive thinking. Place an inner standard, equivalent to the dream that you want to make a reality and execute! Life doesn't care if you were 'a good student' or, 'such a nice person' and 'this shouldn't happen to me!' it throws everything and the kitchen sink! It will beat you to your knees AND up against a wall if you let it. Now, this is where the roads fork and you get classed into either average, or, become a part of the relentless. You have two choices; you can decide to let the world win or you can become relentless and fight back!

The Relentless, are the people you see on Instagram and TikTok with the Lamborghini's, big houses, nice jewelry and bank accounts that look like a phone number! They didn't just happen there one morning. They planned and worked on their goal for years! These luxuries are their rewards for pursuing their purpose and being relentless in this pursuit. Tony Robbins said it best, "People are rewarded in public, for what they practice in private!" You can change your entire life in a year if you wanted to- the hardest part is starting. You don't need to know steps three (3) through thirty (30) as yet. Be concerned about only the first step and the next would become obvious.

Start by just changing your environment. That way it won't be easy to fall back into bad habits by keeping everything around you the same. If your goal is to achieve a better physique, then, empty the snack drawer and replace it with fruit. Fill your refrigerator with whole foods and natural juices. Unsubscribe from those Tik-Tok accounts which show you unhealthy foods. Anything you consume is a part of your diet. This includes: the conversations you have, the foods you eat, the videos you watch, or, even the music you listen to. The next step is putting research into deeds. You don't need more information you need more action. You've already read the books and listened to the podcasts. Now, it's time to get those reps in! Stop procrastinating and do what you've researched. Our feedback loop for positive information and progress is usually determined by how much time we take between gathering information and taking action. By procrastinating you can literally stretch a one-day task, into a month-long project if you wanted to. So, just start!

Once we've started, our next step is to identify purpose and visualize our major goal. Your purpose is usually the thing you do in your spare time and of your own free will. People will often

Xa'v Mitchell Donovan, one of the distinguished judges for the VI Iconic Showcase, is a passionate advocate for empowering youth through fitness and mindset transformation. In his mission, he emphasizes that health and wellness are not merely physical endeavors but transformative journeys rooted in personal empowerment.

comment about how great you are at it and ask for your input on that specific matter. You would also find yourself doing that particular thing for hours at a time. Some of us may have more than one, so pay attention to what you do! Once you've found your purpose it's time to write your goal. Ask yourself this "If I had one year to live what are some things I'd want to do before I leave?" Pay attention to your mood as you write these answers. You will be more excited for some of your answers than for others. Narrow your answers to your top three. Finally, pick the one that excites you the most. Every day, write three tasks you want to accomplish. Ask yourself, "Which of these tasks would take me one step closer to my goal?" Prioritize that one!

This is the foundation for success. To keep this going, remember, you have to be able to reprogram your mind. Unlearn all of the negative thinking and destructive habits keeping you in your current cycle. We've been conditioned to think that failure is bad and getting things wrong is unacceptable. Through

school, all of the students who got 'A's' were praised while 'C' students were frowned upon. A question answered incorrectly, would be met with a harsh, "WRONG!" accompanied by the mocking and laughter of our peers. We would react by sinking far down into our chairs, almost wishing we could disappear and never be remembered. This set the tone for our entire academic career and has been ingrained in our subconscious. This is why we are so afraid to take a chance and risk looking stupid in front of the world which was once the class. We laugh at people who dare to be different, because we were once the ones being laughed at. Transform that hurt into hope, that pain into purpose! Don't allow negativity to control your actions. According to Les Brown. "Another person's opinion does not determine your destiny." Speak positive words over your life and consume the same.

Most of what we do as human beings is dependent upon our emotions and if we are unmotivated, we won't continue to pursue our goals. This is where discipline comes in

and with it, consistency. If we wait for the days when we "feel like it," we would have far less of those days, than if we showed up every-day regardless of how we felt. Discipline will carry you when that feeling of motivation dies. It will also be the very reason it reignites. Stop looking at how long it takes to get where you're going and just be certain that you will get there! Imagine, if I told you that in one (1) year you'd become a millionaire and have the lifestyle of your dreams if you stayed the course, would you keep working towards it, or would you slow down? I'm positive that you'd double up and go even harder! Discipline, consistency, relentlessness and positive thinking are the four (4) pillars of every success story, extraordinary individual and memorable event. These are the characteristics of every one of the greats in history. Those people turned away from normal, created their own path, wrote their own script, directed their own movie and danced to the beat of their own drum. Now, I pass the pen to you! How will you write your story?



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Bladder health:

Bladder health is a vital aspect of overall well-being, yet it is often overlooked until problems arise. Both men and women can experience bladder issues, but the causes, symptoms, and treatments can vary between the sexes. Understanding these differences is key to maintaining a healthy bladder and preventing complications.

Anatomy and function of the bladder:

The bladder is a hollow, muscular organ that stores urine produced by the kidneys before it is expelled from the body. In

men, the bladder is located in front of the rectum and above the prostate gland, while in women, it sits in front of the uterus and vagina. The bladder's main function is to hold urine until the brain signals the need to urinate, at which point the muscles of the bladder contract, and urine is released through the urethra.

Common bladder issues in men and women:

Several common bladder issues affect both men and women, though the incidence and causes may differ. Urinary tract infections, or UTIs, are one of the most prevalent bladder-related problems. Women are more prone to UTIs due to their shorter urethra, which allows bacteria easier access to the bladder. Sexual activity, certain types of birth control, and menopause can increase the risk of UTIs in women. While less common in men, UTIs can still occur, often linked to an enlarged prostate, which can obstruct the flow of urine and create an environment where bacteria thrive.

An overactive bladder, is another widespread issue. Women may develop overactive bladder due to factors such as

pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause, which can all contribute to changes in pelvic floor muscles and hormones. In men, overactive bladder can be associated with an enlarged prostate or prostate surgery, and it is also linked to neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease or stroke. This condition is characterized by a sudden, uncontrollable urge to urinate, often leading to frequent urination and, in some cases, incontinence.

Interstitial cystitis is a chronic disorder that causes bladder pressure, bladder pain, and sometimes pelvic pain. The exact cause of interstitial cystitis is unknown, but it is more common in women than in men, possibly due to hormonal fluctuations. Although interstitial cystitis is less common in men, it can still occur and is often misdiagnosed as a chronic prostate infection, which can lead to delayed or incorrect treatment.

Bladder cancer is another serious concern, and it is more common in men than in women. Smoking is the leading risk factor for bladder cancer, and occupational exposure to certain chemicals can also increase the risk. Symptoms of bladder cancer include blood in the urine, pain during urination,

and frequent urination. Although less common, women can also develop bladder cancer. Unfortunately, symptoms in women are often mistaken for UTIs, leading to delays in diagnosis and treatment.

Incontinence, or the involuntary leakage of urine, is another issue that affects bladder health. In women, stress incontinence, where urine leaks during activities like coughing or lifting, is common, particularly after childbirth or menopause. This condition is often due to the weakening of pelvic floor muscles. In men, incontinence may occur after prostate surgery, which can affect the muscles that control urination. Overactive bladder and urge incontinence are also concerns for men.

Prevention and maintenance of bladder health:

Maintaining bladder health involves a combination of preventive measures and lifestyle choices. Staying hydrated is essential, as drinking plenty of water helps flush out toxins and bacteria from the urinary tract, thus reducing the risk of infections and other bladder issues. Good hygiene practices, such as proper wiping techniques and regular cleansing of the genital area, can also help prevent bacteria from entering the urethra.

A healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, and whole grains will support overall bladder health. It is also advisable to avoid excessive consumption of sugar, caffeine, alcohol, and acidic foods, as these can irritate the bladder or encourage bacterial presence. Regular exercise, particularly pelvic floor exercises like Kegels, can strengthen the muscles that support the bladder, reducing the risk of incontinence in both men and women. Additionally, avoiding smoking is crucial, as it is a major risk factor for bladder cancer and can exacerbate other bladder conditions.

When to see a Doctor:

Regular medical check-ups are important for detecting bladder issues early. Men should be particularly vigilant about prostate health, as prostate problems can significantly

impact bladder function. Managing chronic conditions such as diabetes and obesity is also vital, as these can increase the risk of bladder problems.

If symptoms such as blood in the urine, pain during urination, frequent urination, or difficulty emptying the bladder occur, it is important to seek medical advice promptly. Early diagnosis and treatment of bladder conditions can prevent complications and improve quality of life.

Conclusion:

Bladder health is an essential component of overall health for both men and women. By understanding the common issues, practicing preventive measures, and seeking timely medical care, individuals can maintain a healthy bladder and enjoy a better quality of life. Proactive care is the best approach to preventing and managing bladder-related conditions.

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THE NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS OF Spinach

There is a lot to be said about spinach, a nutritional powerhouse that benefits the body in a myriad of ways. In fact, the many advantages of eating spinach have earned this leafy green a vaunted status among nutritionists. Spinach is low in calories and high in vitamins and minerals. It is also a low-fat source of nutrition. Spinach comes in at only 23 calories for two-thirds of a cup (100 grams).

Let's look at some of the reasons why spinach is a great addition to any plate.

1. Spinach contains vitamin K, vitamin A, folate, manganese, vitamin C, magnesium, riboflavin, iron, vitamin E, copper, potassium, and vitamin B6.
2. Spinach comes in both regular and baby spinach varieties. Each has the same nutritional profile, but since baby spinach is harvested during the early stages of the plant's growth, the leaves are more tender and have a milder flavour.
3. Eating foods that are rich in potassium can help lower blood pressure. Spinach is one such food.
4. Spinach is an excellent source of lutein, an antioxidant that is known to protect against age-related diseases like cataracts and macular degeneration, which is the leading cause of vision impairment and blindness.
5. Spinach promotes strong bones. The leafy green contains calcium that benefits the bones and teeth. Pharma Easy suggests pairing spinach with foods rich in vitamin C to assist with the absorption of calcium.
6. You may benefit from an energy boost by eating spinach. That's because spinach contains iron, which the body needs to utilize energy efficiently.
7. The vitamin A in spinach is used by the body to grow tissue like the skin. WebMD says spinach can help the skin stay hydrated, which reduces the appearance of wrinkles and fine lines.
8. Since spinach is low in calories, you can fill up on it and reduce your risk of overeating less healthy foods. Spinach leaves also are a more nutritious alternative in salads than some lettuces. While eating spinach regularly is beneficial to overall health, it is notable that the way it is produced and packaged can lead to certain medical issues. Like many other leafy greens, spinach can be contaminated with E. coli that can cause foodborne illnesses. Cooking spinach is the best way to prevent illness. If serving spinach raw, it should be washed thoroughly prior to consumption.

Beyond Beauty

by Claudia Hodge

“You have to believe in yourself when no one else does -- that makes you a winner right there”

Venus Williams



Ashley Kelly

An Olympian - Mind, Body and Soul

Virgin Islands athletes have had many challenges and sacrifices, as well as balancing emotions and focus to perform at the highest level, Olympic Games Paris 2024, Virgin Islands 2016 Olympian, Ashley Kelly shed some light on what it takes to make a great Olympian, the importance of being in a healthy space and building the future of athletics in the Virgin Islands.

BB: What are some of the difficulties Olympic athletes face when preparing for the games.

AK: **1. FINANCIAL STRAIN:** Competing at an elite level often requires significant financial investment, including costs for training, travel, coaching, and equipment. Many athletes struggle to secure sufficient sponsorships and funding, leading to financial difficulties. Only about 20% of Olympians have a sneaker or clothing endorsement so we have to rely on other factors for income especially considering it is extremely difficult to train full-time and have a job.

2. PHYSICAL INJURIES: Dealing with nagging injuries while continuing to train and compete adds physical and emotional stress.

3. MENTAL HEALTH AND CONFIDENCE ISSUES: The pressure to perform at the highest level can take a toll on athletes' mental well-being. Managing expectations, dealing with setbacks, and maintaining confidence can be a significant challenge.

4. BALANCING LIFE COMMITMENTS: Many athletes must juggle their sporting commitments with education, work, or family responsibilities, adding to the stress of preparation. I was in Grad school at New York University while training for the 2016 Rio Olympics, I was going 16-hour days to manage school, gym and training while commuting in New York City.

5. ISOLATION AND SACRIFICE: Preparing for the Olympics often requires athletes to isolate themselves from social activities and make significant personal sacrifices, which can lead to feelings of loneliness and

burnout.

6. DEALING WITH PUBLIC AND MEDIA PRESSURE: The spotlight on Olympic athletes can be overwhelming, with constant scrutiny from the media and public. This can add to the mental and emotional burden of preparation.

BB: Share some details of your experience as a 2016 Olympian.

AK: Competing in the 2016 Olympics was the culmination of years of dedication, discipline, and hard work— a dream I had nurtured for as long as I could remember. Balancing my Olympic journey with grad school at New York University added another layer of complexity. My parents insisted on me having a "plan B," and education was the condition for their financial support. Juggling both academic responsibilities and rigorous training was isolating, but I was fortunate to have a supportive group of friends who encouraged and pushed me to stay focused on my goals.

Achieving the Olympic qualifying standard was a moment of immense relief and joy. The pressure of training while constantly thinking about the qualification was a heavy burden. Once I secured my spot, a significant weight was lifted from my shoulders.

Being chosen as the flag bearer for my country at the Olympics was one of the proudest moments of my life. Standing on the global stage, representing my nation, was a powerful experience that filled me with national pride.

However, the day of my race brought

an unexpected challenge. Despite feeling prepared and confident, another runner, Veronica Campbell-Brown, inadvertently ran into my lane during the race. It was a shocking and disorienting moment—something I had never anticipated. In a 23-second race, every millisecond counts, and the disruption threw me off completely. Not advancing due to an event beyond my control was heartbreaking and left me in a deep state of depression.

The aftermath of that race forced me to embark on a journey of self-care and recovery. It wasn't easy, but that journey eventually led to a remarkable comeback. I became a World Championship semi-finalist and broke the national record in the 400m— a record that still stands today.

Through all the highs and lows, I learned that resilience, self-belief, and perseverance are key to overcoming life's challenges, both on and off the track.

BB: WHAT ARE SOME FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO PEAK PERFORMANCE FOR THE ATHLETES?

AK: Peak performance for athletes is achieved through a combination of several factors:

1. TRAINING PROGRAMS

2. MENTAL RESILIENCE: Mental toughness is essential for handling the pressures of competition. Developing strategies to manage stress, maintain focus, and stay motivated can significantly impact performance.

3. SUPPORT SYSTEMS: Having a solid support system, including coaches, family, friends, and fellow athletes, provides the encouragement and guidance needed to push through challenges.

4. BALANCED NUTRITION AND RECOVERY: Proper nutrition fuels the body, while adequate rest and recovery allow it to repair and strengthen. Both are vital for sustaining peak performance over time.

5. GOAL SETTING AND PLANNING: Clear, realistic goals help athletes stay focused and motivated. Strategic planning ensures that



training and preparation are aligned with these goals.

6. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS: Workshops, programs, and initiatives that focus on athlete development, such as those I help create as Chairperson of the BVI Olympic Committee's Athlete Commission, contribute to overall success by enhancing the athlete experience and providing the tools needed for growth.

BB: How important is a healthy routine mentally and physically?

AK: Very important!! Physical Health of course because your success is directly influenced by your physical fitness. Mental Health: A routine that includes mental wellness practices—such as mindfulness, stress management, and goal-setting—helps athletes stay focused, confident, and resilient. Mental preparation is just as important as physical training in achieving success.

BB: What do you believe are the greatest challenges most Virgin Islands athletes are facing today?

AK: I believe the greatest challenges Virgin Islands athletes face today are:

1. ACCESS TO ADEQUATE FUNDING: The financial burden of training and preparing to compete on a global stage is immense. Expecting our athletes to compete against the best in the world without sufficient financial support is unfair. We need to ensure that athletes receive the funding necessary to help level the playing field.

2. ACCESS TO RESOURCES: All our elite athletes train abroad because, in the Virgin

Islands, we lack adequate resources such as facilities, performance centers, and rehabilitation centers. These are essential for training, recovery, and competing at a national or global level.

3. MOTIVATION: There is a need for more inspiring and motivating environments within the Virgin Islands. We must continue to promote and highlight our local heroes so that the next generation can learn about and become more knowledgeable about the positive icons from our community—not just during major events.

Despite these challenges, the BVIIOC, its federations, and now the Ministry of Education, and Youth Affairs are working to level the playing field by funding athletes and creating programs to provide the necessary resources. We need to maintain this trajectory as we witness the emergence of more elite athletes across various sports.

BB: Looking ahead at Los Angeles 2028, what are some plans being implemented to ensure the Virgin Islands has a strong pool of delegates to prepare them?

AK: The British Virgin Islands Olympic Committee is committed to the continued development and advancement of sports in the BVI. It will maintain and strengthen public and private partnerships to secure funding for our athletes and sports programs. Additionally, the Committee will collaborate closely with National Federations to develop strategic plans and enhance their programs, ensuring long-term growth and success for sports in the territory.

As Chairperson of the BVI Olympic Committee's Athlete Commission, Ashley serves as the Athlete Representative on the BVIIOC Executive Board. She is the liaison between athletes and the board, advocating for athletes' rights and ensuring their voices are heard. As a past Olympian, she knows first-hand what the athletes are experiencing and draws on her determination, time management, discipline and mental toughness to provide the best support she can offer. She also develops and nurtures a successful environment for the athletes by hosting a number of workshops and various programs, ensuring the athletes can succeed both on and off the field of play.

Kelly recently traveled to Paris in support of the Virgin Islands Fab4, who all represented the Territory well; each making history in the Territory, as a group and in their respective disciplines. Kyron McMaster OBE and 2 time Olympian, ended 400M Hurdles with a season best 5th place finish in the finals. Adayjah Hodge at just 18 years of age, and the youngest competitor in the 200m, ended her first Olympics with a 17th overall in the semis. First time Olympian, Rikkoi Brathwaite is the first male Olympic 100m semifinalist for the Territory. ILCA7 Men's Dingy first time Olympian, Thad Lettsome had a competition best of 2/43 in Race 4.

Being grateful for her athletic career, Kelly now focuses on helping the Territory grow and expand the future of athletics and sports for the next generation. She is hopeful that for Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games, with the inclusion of squash, we will be able to field squash delegates in the future. She also believes there is significant potential in beach volleyball and 3-on-3 basketball, which could further elevate our presence in these sports. Support our athletes by Following the BVIIOC: IG: @bvioc. FB: @bviolympiccommittee

As we see a rise in the quality of our athletes, Ashley offer this advice to future Virgin Islands Athletes and Olympians:

Stay Committed to Your Vision, Prioritize Your Mental and Physical Health and Surround Yourself with a Strong Support System.

Follow Ashley Kelly: IG : @ashleynatasha FB: @ashleykellybvi

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TEIA LETTSOME CAPTURING HISTORY THROUGH ART

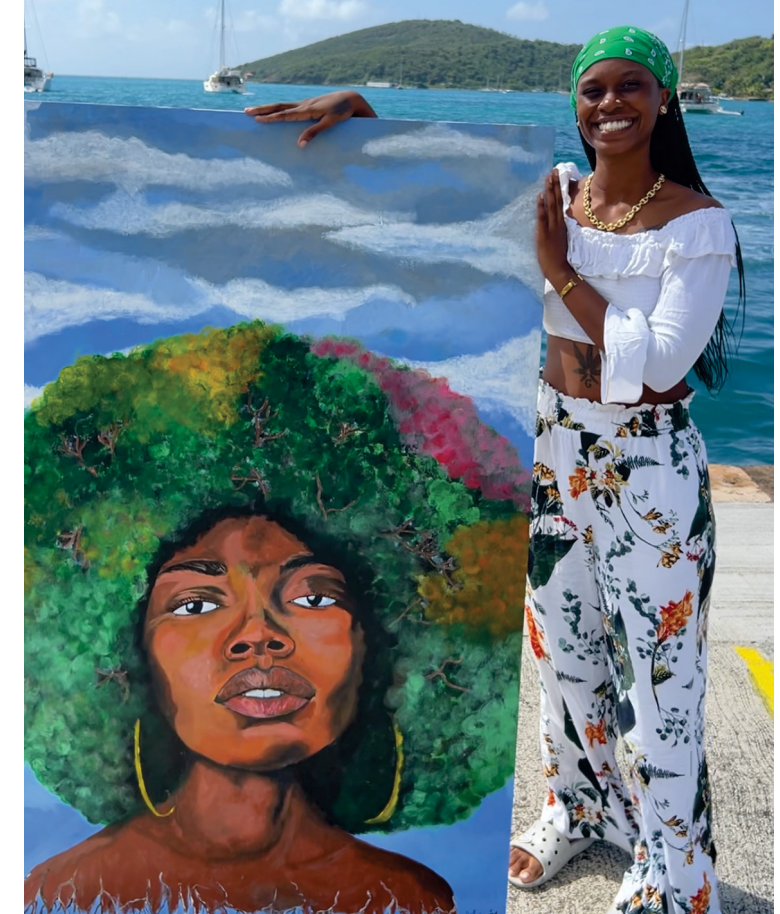
Known for her striking designs and distinctive artistic style that captures the essence and history of our islands while showcasing her deep connection to her heritage, VI Iconic Award nominee in the Visual Arts category, Teia Lettsome, the youngest and only female nominee in this category, shares her personal journey and the inspirations that have shaped her creative path. VI Life and Style took a walk down memory lane with her, exploring how she rose to importance in the world of visual arts.

VIL&S Can you share a bit about your journey into the visual arts? What drew you to the medium, and how has your style evolved over time?

TL Both my older brother and my mother are into the Arts as well. They inspired me to delve into the use of graphite and charcoal to create my art. As I was learning, I mimicked my brother's talent for drawing realistic portraits, until I found my niche. I would describe my style to be a bit more colorful as I make use of many other mediums such as resin, oil paints and acrylic.

VIL&S What inspired you to explore different mediums in your work? How do these various mediums help you express your ideas more fully?

TL As an artist, your pieces speak to you. No one medium is used to portray every message. Charcoal has its place in my heart, but I express myself more freely and have a deeper appreciation and connection when I use color. Sometimes the texture of something may resonate



with an Individual more than just a color; you can never be afraid to try something different.

VIL&S What does “capturing history through art” mean to you? How do you approach this concept in your work?

TL Capturing history through art means to tell a story without using any words. A lot of my work is centralized around my own Caribbean background, hence the use of vibrant colors. The colors used are fueled by festive events like August carnival with displays by the Mocko Jumbie dancers which tell a story. It speaks to the traditions of celebration that have carried on for years. In some portraits I depict metaphors that address sensitive topics such as slavery, mental health and financial struggles. Capturing history through art means making your canvas is a time capsule, because whatever you depict on it deserves to be remembered.

VIL&S Can you give an example of a piece where you feel you successfully captured a moment in history? What was the process like, and what challenges did you face?

TL I created a sentimental piece inspired by Angela Davis, a feminist’s activist that inspired

many including myself. The piece was bought by Mr. Leroy Abraham, which can be seen at “The Attic” the night bar located in the Cyril B. Romney Pier Park. The greatest challenge that I faced whilst creating this piece was the disconnect, I felt not being able to capture the true essence of her pain and her story as a bystander, merely reading about her experience.

VIL&S How do you balance accuracy and artistic interpretation when depicting historical events? Do you feel a responsibility to remain true to historical facts, or do you allow for creative liberties?

TL This is a tricky question to answer plainly, trying to be too accurate may cause some of us artists to start overthinking our pieces, however being a bit overly creative and not accurate enough can offset the truth to history which nobody wants. There must be balance, I believe that as an artist I have the right to express my creativity, but I also must respect the true existence of our past. Be creative but never lose the actual essence of the message of history you set out to depict.

VIL&S You mentioned using different mediums to capture

history; How does the choice of medium influence the way you tell historical stories?

TL I like to look at it the opposite way, the stories influence my use of medium. My first goal is always to learn. If I’m learning about independence, I feel bright, so I use vibrant vivacious colors that transcend into the medium of acrylic paints, spray paints, or watercolor. If I’m learning about our ancestral history and their struggles it makes me feel remorseful & resilient at the same time that may transcend into the medium of charcoal because I want that moment to be black and white. This medium suggests that this moment in time was definitive and factual.

VIL&S Are there any specific techniques you use to evoke a sense of history in your work? For example, do you incorporate traditional methods, or do you experiment with modern techniques?

TL I’m a firm believer in learning from those who have done it before me. I watch a lot of Bob Ross videos because I love his bold techniques of painting without sketches and seeing how he adds layers to make things more realistic. I love Frida Kahlo because

her technique was the exact opposite of Bob Ross’. She was less worried with the accuracy of details and zoned in on just the metaphors which I apply when I paint to express surrealism. In my own way I evoke a sense of history through my work by using techniques learned through doing research on them. Of course, it’s mixed with my own creativity which I consider pretty modern and aesthetically appealing to make a great combination.

VIL&S What message do you hope viewers take away from your historical pieces? How do you want your art to influence or educate people?

TL I always want viewers to have their own perspective of my art, I rather not chase the creative thinking of the onlooker, as everyone’s perspective will be different. I would like my art to inspire others the same way I have been inspired. I am eager to market myself enough to drive my art towards my target audience who will appreciate history being told through art.

VIL&S Have you noticed any particular reactions from audiences to your work on

historical themes? Are there any memorable interactions or feedback that stood out to you?

TL A very memorable experience of this was when I attended my first art expo in 2023, showcasing a piece titled ‘Who’s Behind the Mask’. The piece was of a tribal mother wearing a headscarf and beads holding her baby cuddled in a fur blanket. This piece was purchased by Mi Amor Jewelers and auctioned at “Hues of Blue” fundraiser event in support of Keisha Almorales. I was so happy and honored that my portrait could’ve had such a positive influence and be a part of an even more powerful movement.

VIL&S Are there any historical events or periods that you’re particularly drawn to explore in future works? What about these events resonates with you?

TL I tend to draw inspiration from sentimental and emotional moments of our ancestor’s past. I have also been influenced by my favorite artists which propels me to explore creativity in whatever form I choose depending on the story that I am hoping to portray. I believe that for now this is where my artistic nature lies, who knows where it

will take me in the near future.

VIL&S How do you see the role of art in preserving and interpreting history in the digital age? Do you think the shift to digital mediums has changed the way history is captured and remembered?

TL I believe that change is inevitable. Digital art has been something that I reluctantly got into but loved it once I did. It has its benefits, but it takes away from the authenticity of the artist in their ability to create a unique and original piece; however, I do not believe that digital mediums change the way history is captured.

VIL&S What advice would you give to emerging artists who want to explore historical themes in their work?

TL No matter what, keep going. Time will keep going; therefore, you need to as well. Do not be afraid to try new things or to even reach out to others to learn new things from them. Growth is something that occurs inevitably, but you can channel the positive energy of growth by nurturing the things that bring you peace.



A young man's journey through faith, spirituality, and inspiration

In a close-knit community like the British Virgin Islands, our youths face mounting pressures, while navigating a complex landscape dominated by media influences and various forms of addiction. As we strive to bridge the generational divide, we also turn to our young people for inspiration, recognizing their resilience and their potential to lead us toward a brighter future.

Virgin Islands Life&Style was honored to meet Mr. Oneyke Huggins, a young man whose journey through faith, spirituality, and inspiration serves as a beacon for both youths and adults.

VIL&S: Can you tell us about your background and what initially drew you to the field of Religion, Spirituality, and Inspiration? Was there a particular experience or moment that inspired you to pursue this path?

OH: I grew up in a Christian Adventist home as an only child, which shaped much of my early life. However, despite being deeply involved in church activities, I never truly connected with my faith on a personal level. It wasn't until I faced a period of feeling lost and unfulfilled that I turned to God for guidance. That turning point marked the beginning of a deeper spiritual journey for me.

I had been exposed to a lifestyle that, while seemingly fulfilling from the outside, left me feeling empty inside. This sense of emptiness led me to question the deeper meaning of my life and my relationship with God. It was in that moment of seeking, of genuinely searching for answers beyond what I had been taught, that I started to truly understand and appreciate my faith.

The realization that I needed more than just participation in religious activities pushed me to focus on my Christian Walk in a more meaningful way. My journey to a deeper relationship with God has been transformative, guiding me towards a life centered on faith and spiritual growth. It's this journey that eventually led me to explore and

focus on the fields of Religion, Spirituality, and Inspiration, as I wanted to help others find the same fulfillment and connection that I found.

VIL&S: At such a young age, what motivated you to take this unconventional route? Were there any influences or mentors that guided your decision?

OH: At a young age, I was motivated to take this unconventional route because I recognized that even though I was young, I was going through struggles that only God could help me navigate. Growing up, I saw how easy it was for people my age to feel lost or disconnected, and I realized that young people, just like anyone else, need God's guidance and love to find true fulfillment.

Initially, I didn't have a mentor to guide me on this path, which made the journey challenging at times. It wasn't until recently that I found a church family at Spirit and Truth Church, led by Pastor Devon Penn. This community has been a tremendous blessing, providing the support, wisdom, and encouragement I needed to grow in my faith. I'm deeply grateful for their influence in my life, as they've helped me strengthen my relationship with God and continue pursuing this path with even greater passion.

VIL&S: What does being nominated for an award in this field mean to you? How does this recognition reflect your journey and the work you've put into this area?

OH: Being nominated for an award in this field is a powerful confirmation that I'm on the path God intended for me. It signifies that others are



Oneyke Huggins

recognizing and valuing the work I'm doing. While I deeply appreciate the acknowledgment from my community and beyond, the most meaningful recognition for me is knowing that God sees and supports my efforts.

VIL&S: You mentioned having a business partner. Can you share how this partnership came about? How did you two meet, and what made you decide to work together?

OH: Hakeem Gravesande and I first connected through Advent Hearts Drum Corp many years ago, which laid the foundation for our partnership. Our collaboration began with the cover art for "Save Me" my first single and continued through projects like the "Tell Somebody" music video, visuals for my EP, and AIM Sessions. We decided to focus on commercial work to secure project funding, allowing us to build up AIM Productions and expand our creative endeavors.

VIL&S: How has your partnership influenced the growth and direction of your business? What strengths do each of you bring to the table?

OH: Our partnership has been instrumental in the growth and direction of our business. Given our history of working together, it was a natural choice to combine our strengths to advance the business. Hakeem's expertise in visuals, videography, and cinematography complements my skills in sound and audio. This synergy has enabled us to create a dynamic and versatile team, fueling the success of AIM Productions by offering a full spectrum of creative services.

VIL&S: Can you describe the moment when you realized your business was starting to blossom? What were some key milestones or turning points?

OH: Our business truly began to take off when Spirit & Truth Church gave us the green light to set up a studio. That was a pivotal moment, reinforcing our commitment to keeping our work God-focused. Another major breakthrough came when we needed essential equipment but lacked the funds. Miraculously, everything we needed—and more—came together quickly, confirming that we were on the right path and fueling our momentum. We also want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors, whose support has been instrumental in our journey. Your generosity and belief in our mission have made all the difference.

VIL&S: How do you integrate your passion for religion and spirituality into your business? What role do these elements play in your entrepreneurial journey?

OH: As a Christian, my faith is a fundamental part of who I am, so integrating it into my business was a natural step. It's not just something I practice personally—it's the foundation of how I approach my work. Bringing my faith into a professional setting means ensuring that our business decisions, projects, and interactions reflect the values and principles that guide my life. Religion and spirituality aren't just aspects of our business; they shape our entire entrepreneurial journey, influencing everything from our creative vision to how we conduct ourselves in the industry.

VIL&S: What challenges have you faced in combining such a personal and spiritual focus with a business venture? How do you maintain authenticity and integrity in your work?

OH: So far, I haven't faced any challenges in combining my personal and spiritual focus with our business venture, and for that, I'm thankful. Maintaining authenticity and integrity in our work comes effortlessly because our business is an extension of who we are. By staying true to our values and keeping our work God-centered, we're able to navigate our projects with a clear sense of purpose and honesty. This approach has allowed us to align our professional goals with our spiritual beliefs seamlessly.

VIL&S: In what ways do you feel your business contributes to the broader conversation around spirituality and inspiration? How do you engage with your audience or community through your work?

OH: Our business contributes to the broader conversation around spirituality and inspiration by inspiring Christian creatives and entrepreneurs to integrate their faith into their work. We demonstrate how serving God and conducting business can go hand in hand.

We engage with our audience through various platforms, including YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. Through these channels, we share uplifting content, provide encouragement, and foster a sense of community, reflecting our commitment to both our faith and our professional endeavors.

VIL&S: Vision and Impact - What is the mission or vision behind your business? What impact do you hope to have on others through your work?

OH: Our mission is to be a leading production company in the Caribbean, creating exceptional content that resonates with audiences and sets industry standards. We also aim to inspire and uplift others through our work, striving to exceed expectations and make a meaningful difference in the industry and community.

VIL&S: Can you share a story or example where your work has made a significant impact on someone's life? How did this experience affect you personally?

OH: One of the most meaningful aspects of my work is hearing from people who find comfort in my music during tough times. Knowing that my songs help and bless others is incredibly humbling. Lately, I've also been sharing more about my faith, and seeing others gain clarity through these conversations gives my work deeper purpose. I'm also deeply grateful for the AIM team. Watching them do what they love and witnessing their impact reminds me of the importance of our work together.

VIL&S: How do you see your work evolving in the future? Are there new directions or projects you're excited to explore?

OH: I see my work evolving as I continue to deepen my relationship with God and walk in my purpose. Each new experience shapes the stories I share with the world. I'm especially excited about working on

my first album, which I hope will resonate deeply and touch many souls across the Caribbean and beyond.

VIL&S: As a young entrepreneur, what have been some of the most important lessons you've learned so far? What advice would you give to other young people looking to start their own ventures?

OH: Plan thoroughly, stay organized, and surround yourself with a team that shares your vision. Don't wait until everything is perfect to start—take that first step and continue to learn as you go.

VIL&S: How do you balance the demands of running a business with maintaining your own spiritual and personal growth? What practices or routines help you stay grounded?

OH: As a new business, our demands are manageable for now, but as they grow, I plan to balance them by prioritizing my time and staying disciplined. I'll ensure to keep space for spiritual reflection and personal growth in my routine.

VIL&S: What role does innovation play in your business? How do you stay ahead in such a unique and evolving field?

OH: We rely on our creativity to keep our work original. Innovation comes naturally, as I let my creative instincts guide me, ensuring that everything we produce is authentic and true to our vision.

VIL&S: Looking back, what are you most proud of in your journey so far? How do these accomplishments align with your original goals or aspirations?

OH: I'm most proud of my consistency on this journey. I never lost sight of what I asked God for in the beginning. Even when things didn't go as planned or took longer than expected, I remained determined to keep going. With each step forward, I've seen everything gradually align with my original goals and aspirations.

VIL&S: What's next for you and your business? Do you have any upcoming projects or goals that you're particularly excited about?

OH: Next for us, we're excited to expand into more commercial work and continue our aim sessions. We're also looking forward to producing a variety of new series and podcasts.

VIL&S: If you could share one key message or piece of inspiration with young entrepreneurs, what would it be? How do you hope your story will inspire others?

OH: My key message to young entrepreneurs would be: Pray and Trust in God's plan, as it often exceeds anything you could envision for yourself.



Wally Castro Marine, the organizers of the Xmas in July 2024 event, have donated \$6,000 to Beyond the Reef, a nonprofit organization in the British Virgin Islands that is dedicated to marine environmental education and preservation. The generous donation was made possible through the sale of the event's official stainless steel reusable tumblers, which was one of the event's environmental protection initiatives. "This initiative reflects our desire to create awareness on the importance of protecting our beaches and to send the message that our event takes beach and ocean conservation very seriously," said Wally Castro, owner of Wally Castro Marine and the event's main organizer. "With this donation, we are proud to support a local organization that shares our dedication to environmental stewardship."

This year's Xmas in July event went beyond celebration to set a powerful example of eco-conscious event planning. From the reusable tumblers to waste disposal efforts, the event was designed to minimize its environmental footprint. The organizers implemented measures to ensure that attendees left no

trace behind, reinforcing the message that preserving the natural beauty of the British Virgin Islands is a shared responsibility. The positive impact of these efforts was evident, as both locals and visitors embraced the eco-friendly initiatives, making the event not only a success but also a model for sustainable tourism.

Beyond the Reef members were actively involved in the event, overseeing the sales of the Xmas in July tumblers. They were joined by representatives from another local nonprofit, Valley Sound Lions Club, who prepared local dishes for attendees, further supporting fundraising efforts.

"We are deeply grateful for this donation, which will help us continue our work in promoting marine environment protection in the BVI," said Kendyl Berna, founder of Beyond the Reef. "Our oceans are a vital but fragile resource, and it's crucial that everyone who enjoys the sea does so responsibly. We commend the event organizers for their environmental initiatives and encourage them to continue these efforts in the future."

The 2024 edition of Xmas in July was celebrated successfully on July 20, drawing nearly 5,000 attendees and 500 vessels to

Pond Bay Beach, Virgin Gorda. The event, a staple of the summer season, was organized by Wally Castro Marine in collaboration with the British Virgin Islands Tourist Board and Marcos Rivera.

Wally Castro Marine, based in Fajardo, Puerto Rico, is Puerto Rico's leading boat dealer, representing top brands such as Riviera Yachts, Boston Whaler, Bertram, Regulator, Belize, Nor-Tech, and Azimut Yachts. The company also offers a parts store, a service department, and repair and maintenance services for all boat brands.

"Each year, Xmas in July lights up our summer season, thanks to the Puerto Rican Navy and BVI fans who come in to enjoy the best that our territory has to offer," said Clive McCoy, BVI Tourism Director. "By choosing the BVI, they support our marinas, hotels, resorts, villas, restaurants, and charters, giving a significant boost to our marine tourism industry as well as supporting the efforts of our local nonprofits."

For more information on the Xmas in July event, visit www.wallycastro.com or contact the BVI Tourism Office in Puerto Rico at (787) 721-2525 or bvi@prlinkscsco.com. You can also reach us on social media as Islas Virgenes Británicas on Facebook and BVI Turismo on Instagram.

Beaches

TORTOLA

- 1 Trellis Bay, Beef Island
- 2 Long Bay, Beef Island
- 3 Little Bay
- 4 Josiah's Bay
- 5 Lambert Bay
- 6 Trunk Bay
- 7 Rouges Bay
- 8 Brewers Bay
- 9 Cane Garden Bay
- 10 Apple Bay
- 11 Long Bay, West End
- 12 Smuggler's Cove
- 13 Brandywine Bay

VIRGIN GORDA

- 14 St. Thomas Bay
- 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

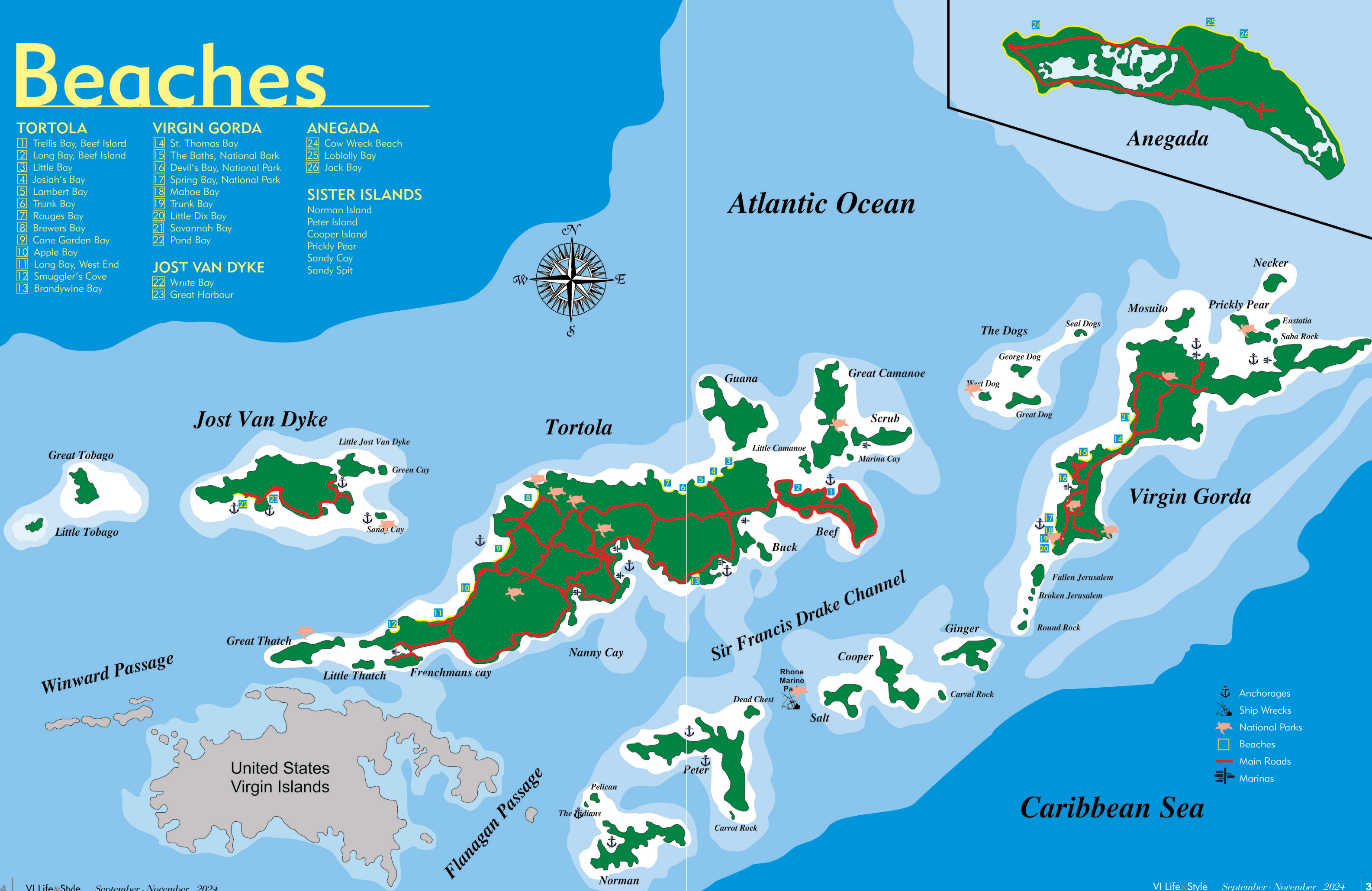
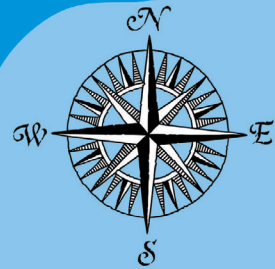
- 22 Write Bay
- 23 Great Harbour

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.

2024 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 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



Gorvey Henry



GORVEYHENRY
C A K E S

A TASTE FROM THE VI

The British Virgin Islands have gained international recognition through the exquisite culinary creations of BVislanders, who reflect their cultural roots in kitchens worldwide. In 2009, Gorvey has shared his talents as a Culinary Instructor at H. Lavity Stoult Community College (HLSCC). Since 2019, Gorvey has made a home in London, and continues to inspire others, offering a delightful taste of the Virgin Islands.

VIL&S: Can you tell us about your roots in the Virgin Islands and how they've influenced your culinary career?

GH: I was fortunate to be surrounded by

my great aunts and my mother, who cooked every day. They didn't just cook exclusively for their household but also for the extended households of their children, neighbours, and the sick and shut-in. Having that baseline of culinary benevolence and an interest in the kitchen, I was quickly given the task of helping with the preparation of foods.

I quickly understood the impact that food and nutrition could have on communities and individuals and valued it as one of bonding agents that kept our families connected.

VIL&S: Was there a particular moment or experience that solidified your decision?

GH: I was 17 years old and working as a Client

Associate (teller) at Chase Manhattan Bank. I quickly realised that this role was not for me. Just shy of a year working at Chase Manhattan, I secretly planned my escape. I applied for culinary school, quit my job, and the rest is history.

VIL&S: What early memories of food and cooking stand out to you?

GH: During summer breaks as a child, I picked up the task of cooking for my cousins and the larger household, replicating dishes that I love and particular dishes which were requested. My cousins became my first testers and not only honed my skills, but also provided the critiques that told me what I was doing good and what I could do better.



VIL&S: What motivated you to pursue a career in culinary arts and hospitality?

GH: No one influenced or motivated me, but the culinary television show 'Great Chefs of America' sparked my interest in culinary possibilities.

Having been exposed to such culinary wonders, I was always particularly disappointed when it came to the dessert aspect of meals. For me, the dessert is the grand finale of any meal. The plated reality offered always felt very anticlimactic with a slice of a store-bought pie or chocolate cake with a dribble of fruit sauce and mint for greenery.

So, I sat my sights on becoming a pastry chef and created culinary wonders of my own just like the ones showcased on Great Chefs of America.

VIL&S: How has your journey from the Virgin Islands to London shaped your approach to cooking?

GH: Interestingly enough, it was the other way around. It was my time in London at the Park Lane Sheraton Hotel in 2003 that shaped my approach to cooking and the wider hospitality industry. Although I hated my time at The Sheraton Hotel, the lessons of humility, integrity, and attention to detail were instrumental to the person that I am today.

VIL&S: What challenges did you face, and how have you adapted your style to different culinary environments?



GH: Due to that fact, I was classically trained and worked internationally, my transitions have been easy.

VIL&S: You've been nominated for a commerce/media show award. Can you tell us more about this achievement and what it means to you?

GH: In 2014, I was awarded a LIME for Local and Talented Award.

This award recognised local talent in the BVI by placing a spotlight on the creative industry within the BVI. It signified that I was on the right trajectory with all I was doing within my craft.

Besides the LIME for Local and Talented award, I have been recognised in several printed and online news media.

Namely: The Welcome Magazine – Cake Boss of the Virgin Islands

The BVI Beacon- Baking Outside the Box
Virgin Islands News Online - Young Professional of the Week

The Island Sun - (Gorvey Henry earns accolades as Prince of Pastry Chef)

VIL&S: How do you feel this recognition reflects your work in the culinary industry?

GH: At that time, I felt my dedication, consistency and doing what other chefs aren't willing to do, to train themselves mentally and physically to be the best paid off.

VIL&S: What has your experience been like working with Ann's Smart School of Cookery?

GH: It forced me out of my comfort zone and kept me in a phase of learning. At Ann's Smart School of Cookery, we touched on almost every cuisine, some of which I had never eaten before. This broad exposure and experience gave me a launch pad to explore far and beyond my culinary strengths, which in turn allowed me to gain cultural expertise on other cuisines.

VIL&S: How does this role allow you to share your culinary knowledge and passion with others?

GH: That was the genesis of my role: imparting my knowledge to all clients at Ann's Smart School of Cookery through stories, demonstrations, and guidance.

VIL&S: As a seasoned culinary and hospitality leader, how do you stay innovative in your field?

GH: I am consistently stalking social media. I visit chef platforms where chefs share their

knowledge. I also attend trade shows where I am able to network, listen in on masterclasses and, spend time browsing through the hospitality and chef collections in the bookstores (I am bit old school I love a good book over a digital copy). I also enjoy visiting and eating at local holes-in-the-wall to 5-star, Michelin restaurants.

VIL&S: What drives you to keep evolving and experimenting with new ideas?

GH: I am a lifelong learner. It excites me how the hospitality/culinary industry is constantly

evolving. Given that I am from a very small corner of the world, I take pride in being able to deliver at a high standard.

VIL&S: Virgin Islands cuisine is known for its rich flavours and cultural significance. How do you incorporate these elements into your cooking today?

GH: I always believe food is a representation of one's self. Thus, when I present any dish and the guest tastes it, you're tasting it the way I would enjoy it.

Sometimes the Virgin Islands' palate can lean very heavily on the salt factor. I believe in allowing the flavours of the ingredients to take centre stage, creating a composition of flavours that complement each other.

VIL&S: Are there any specific dishes or ingredients that you feel particularly connected to?

GH: No I don't. As I am always evolving and researching.

VIL&S: Can you share two traditional Virgin Islands recipes that are still your favourites, but that you've tweaked over the years?

GH: I have only one (1) recipe that is dear to me, boil fish in mayonnaise sauce

VIL&S: What changes have you made to these recipes, and why?

GH: Because I believe in the traditional cuisine and flavours of the Virgin Islands and the larger Caribbean region, I steer away from any alterations. If any changes were to be made to these dishes, it would be the presentation of the elements and cooking techniques.

VIL&S: What makes these recipes special to you, and how do they resonate with your identity as a Virgin Islands chef? Do you have any stories or memories associated with these dishes?

GH: Every Thursday, religiously, my grandmother would have Boil Fish in Mayonnaise Sauce.

VIL&S: How do you see the

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Monday January 13th
Wednesday February 12th
Friday March 14th
Saturday April 12th
Monday May 12th
Wednesday June 11th
Friday July 11th
Saturday August 9th
Sunday September 7th
Monday October 6th
Wednesday November 5th
Thursday December 4th

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Sunday February 1st
Tuesday March 3rd
Wednesday April 1st
Friday May 1st
Sunday May 31st
(Blue Moon, Last Blue Moon Was August 2023)
Monday June 29th
Wednesday July 29th
Friday August 28th
Saturday September 26th
Monday October 26th
Tuesday November 24th
Wednesday December 23rd



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influence of Virgin Islands culture in your culinary work?

GH: Within my business Gorvey Henry Cakes (GHC) By incorporating fruit flavours into my cake icings.

VIL&S: Do you feel a responsibility to preserve and promote these flavours, especially in an international context?

GH: Yes, it is! I always embrace the opportunity to showcase Virgin Islands food as it would be cooked in the Virgin Islands. To introduce foodies and novices alike to Virgin Islands cuisine.

VIL&S: In what ways do you think Virgin Islands cuisine can be better represented or appreciated globally?

GH: By staying true to the flavours and ingredients that make the cuisine unique to other Caribbean cuisines.

VIL&S: What do you find most rewarding about being a chef and culinary leader?

GH: The ability to be creative and share my knowledge with junior chefs and aspiring culinary students.

VIL&S: How does this role allow you to connect with others and share your passion?

GH: Because food is a personal choice, I am able to connect with people on a more personal level. Learning and sharing life memories through the journey of food.

VIL&S: Looking ahead, are there any new projects or culinary ventures that you're excited about?

GH: Yes! I have a few projects I have been cultivating over the past five (5) years. I am not going to disclose all, but will touch on one. I am working on a book which I am very excited about, I am giving myself five (5) years to complete this project. The aim is to showcase Caribbean cuisine in its rawest, most traditional form.

VIL&S: How do you envision your future in the culinary world, both

in London and in connection with the Virgin Islands?

GH: As a best-selling culinary author, spreading my knowledge of my Culinary/hospitality journey to all four (4) corners of the world.

VIL&S: What advice would you give to aspiring chefs, especially those from the Virgin Islands, who want to make a mark in the culinary industry?

GH: Don't settle for anything but the best. Be open to all opportunities even if you feel that

you're not ready. Do not be afraid to stand tall in your passion.

VIL&S: Are there any lessons from your own journey that you'd like to share?

GH: Know when it's time to leave! You leave bad personal relationships, take the same stance with professional relationships. If you're not learning, you're not growing and if you're not happy, your food and guests wouldn't be happy. Your emotions will always transfer to your food. Find your place, navigate your space and trust the PATH.

Boiled Fish in Mayonnaise Sauce

Portions: 4

BOILED FISH

INGREDIENTS AMOUNT

- Whole, Fish- 4 each, 450g bone-in
- Salt To season fish
- Onions, sliced 100 grams
- Celery, sliced 50 grams
- Bell Pepper, sliced 50 grams
- Scotch Bonnet pepper 1 each
- Water 4 liters



MAYONNAISE SAUCE

INGREDIENTS AMOUNT

- Mayonnaise, jar 200 grams
- Fish Broth 100 ml
- Butter, unsalted 50 grams
- Onions, sliced 100 grams
- Lime juice 20 grams
- Tabasco- To taste
- Fish Broth* 300 ml –

*Water from what the fish was cooked in

METHOD:

Boiled Fish

1. Fill a large stock pot with water and place on high heat to bring to a boil
2. Slice Onions, Celery and Bell peppers and place into the stock pot
3. Also add 1 Scotch bonnet Pepper
4. Season fishes with salt to your taste and place into the boiling water
5. Cook for 20 minutes or until the fishes are fully cooked, once cooked take off the heat

Mayonnaise Sauce

1. Combine Mayonnaise and 100ml of fish broth in a bowl and whisk until smooth
2. Slice Onions
3. Place a small sauce pot on medium heat
4. Add unsalted Butter to pot and melt
5. Add Sliced Onions and lime juice to melted butter and cook for 1 minute until soften no colour
6. Pour 300ml of Fish Broth into the onion and butter mixture
7. Followed by the combined Mayonnaise and fish broth
8. Cook for 2 minutes
9. Taste and adjust for spiciness with tabasco sauce to your liking

To Plate

1. Remove fish from broth and spoon mayonnaise sauce over fish.

Lunch Box Ideas



Ham and Mac & Cheese Lunchbox Muffins

Ingredients:

- 2 cups prepared Kraft Mac & Cheese
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup diced ham
- 1/4 cup bread crumbs + 2 tablespoons

Like I mentioned, I like to use leftovers for this recipe. We have busy nights on Tuesdays, so I'll make a quick meal of macaroni and cheese, carrot sticks, and some fruit for my kids. There's usually the right amount of mac and cheese leftover from that to prepare these muffins with...and then I'm all set for lunches for Wednesday and Thursday.

Directions:

- Combine macaroni and cheese with eggs, ham, and 1/4 cup bread crumbs. Stir until well combined.
- Spray eight openings in a muffin tin with non-stick spray.
- Use an ice cream scoop to add 1/2 cup of mixture to each cup.
- Gently press mixture down with your fingers to flatten it into each cup.
- Sprinkle with additional bread crumbs.
- Bake in a 350 degree oven for 20-25 minutes...depending on how soft or firm you prefer your muffins. Immediately remove from cups to cool on a wire rack. Refrigerate after 30 minutes of cooling.

Pizza Pancakes

Ingredients

- 2 cups Biscuit/Baking Mix
- 2 tsp. Italian Seasoning
- 2 Eggs
- 1 cup 2% Milk
- 1/2 cup Part-Skim Mozzarella Cheese shredded
- 1/2 cup Pepperoni chopped
- 1/4 cup Cherry Tomatoes chopped and seeded
- 1/4 cup Green Peppers chopped
- 1 cup Pizza Sauce warmed

Instructions

- In a bowl, combine biscuit mix and Italian seasoning.
- In another bowl, whisk eggs and milk until blended. Add to dry ingredients, stirring until moistened.
- Stir in the cheese, pepperoni, tomatoes, and peppers.
- Preheat griddle to medium heat and lightly grease.
- Pour batter by 1/4 cupfuls onto griddle; cook until bubbles on top begin to pop and bottoms are golden brown. Turn, cook until second side is golden brown.
- Serve with warm pizza sauce for dipping.



Chicken Ranch Wraps

Ingredients

- 2 cups cooked grilled chicken breasts chopped (seasoned with your favorite spices, see note*)
- 1/4 cup Hidden Valley® Simply Ranch dressing
- 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup cilantro minced (optional)
- 4 8" tortillas

Instructions

1. Lay tortillas on a clean flat surface. Place about 1/2 cup chicken, 1 tablespoon ranch, 2 tablespoons of cheese, and 1 tablespoon of minced cilantro on each tortilla. Fold tightly to form a burrito shape.
2. Heat a heavy-duty pan or grill to medium heat. Coat with a light layer of oil or cooking spray and cook wraps for 1-2 minutes on each side or until the tortilla is crispy and golden. Remove from heat, slice in half and serve immediately.

Recipe Notes

*For the chicken: You can use cooked rotisserie chicken, leftover chicken, or grilled chicken seasoned with your favorite spices. I like to season my chicken with a tablespoon of fajita seasoning and grill in a hot pan for 5-6 minutes per side or until cooked through.



Pizza Roll Ups

INGREDIENTS

- 1 loaf frozen bread dough, thawed, 1 lb
- 1/4 cup prepared pizza or 1/4 cup pasta sauce
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped pepperoni
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
- Generously coat a rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray.
- Roll dough into a 10 inch square on a floured surface.
- Spread pizza or pasta sauce over dough.
- Sprinkle all but 2 tsp mozzarella over the sauce.
- Top with pepperoni.
- Roll up dough jelly-roll style to enclose filling.
- Cut roll crosswise into 10 slices.
- Place slices, cut side down on baking sheet.
- Brush tops with oil.
- Sprinkle with parmesan and remaining mozzarella cheese.
- Bake until golden brown, about 15 minutes.



Club Sandwich

INGREDIENTS

- 3 slices toasted bread
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 slices American cheese
- 4 slices shaved ham
- 4 tomatoes, sliced, divided
- 4 leaves lettuce, divided
- 4 slices crisp bacon, divided
- 2 slices monterey jack cheese
- 4 slices shaved deli turkey

DIRECTIONS

- Spread mayonnaise on one side of a piece of toast; add layer of American cheese, ham, two slices of tomato, two leaves of lettuce, and two pieces of bacon.
- Spread mayonnaise on second piece of toast and place on top, mayo side down.
- Spread mayonnaise on top of that second piece of toast.
- Layer Monterey Jack cheese, the rest of the tomatoes, lettuce, turkey and bacon on top.
- Spread mayonnaise on third piece of toast and place on the stack mayo side down.
- Slice the sandwich in quarters diagonally.
- Long toothpicks may be used to hold all the layers together.





The Secret to Getting More Done in Less Time

If only I could just get more done in a day. Do you find yourself saying that often? Or is it just me? We overbook our calendars, procrastinate on important tasks and get bogged down by activities that don't move the needle. Sometimes we simply take on too much—even when we know better.

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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. Following her calling, she 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 synergy and intentional living on her website www.MarvaSmith.com.

This is especially true at the beginning of the year when we're raring to go. So, how do we get past this conundrum of wanting to get a lot accomplished but feeling like you're running out of time?

The answer? Embrace these five productivity hacks to get more done in less time.

1. Make Your Calendar Your Friend

Wondering if you should get involved in another fundraising activity? Want to know how much time you can spare for that new project?

Start by blocking off time on your calendar for all your existing projects. Fill in all your appointments, church events, kids' activities, time for meals and family functions, work deadlines and everything else you're committed to.

Make it a habit to block off time in your

calendar for every commitment, and you'll never again over-promise or over-commit.

2. Check Your Habits and Rituals

Without thinking about it, we often have certain habits and rituals we follow.

You have a morning ritual (wake up, brush your teeth, have your devotions, work out, eat, shower, and get to work), evening ritual (check homework, tuck the kids in, watch the evening news, and hit the sack), weekend ritual (sleep late, grocery shop, catch a movie, go to church, visit your mom), and so on.

The trouble is, if you're not careful your rituals can turn into productivity killers.

Is checking Facebook or email a part of your morning ritual? Distractions such as these can turn even your best intentions into hours of wasted time.

Take a good look at your rituals and routines, and see what needs to change,

even if it means moving some activities to another part of your day.

3. Let Go of the Reins

Here's some good news: you don't have to do everything all by yourself.

Whether it's at work or at home, you can (and should) hand over certain tasks to someone else. At work you can have an assistant create documents and manage your calendar. At home, get the children involved in age-appropriate chores that will benefit them and you.

The time you free up will allow you to work on what's truly important—and on the things that only you can do.

4. Get Laser-focused

You might think you can get more done by doing several things at once, but multi-tasking simply doesn't work.

Instead, block time for important tasks,

then turn everything else off so you can focus on one task at a time. No phone, no Facebook, no kids or husbands or neighbors or pets demanding "just a minute" of your time. Tune everything out, and you'll find your tasks getting done much faster.

5. Make Time for Play

Trying to do too much without any time for rest and relaxation is a sure way to burn out. You cannot work all day, every day and hope to be at your best.

Get some rest. Go for a prayer walk. Head to the beach. Plan a personal retreat. Take a friend out to lunch. See a movie. Do something—anything—other than work.

Not only will you return feeling much more refreshed, but you'll find yourself more creative and productive than before as well.

So, give these tips a try and let me know how they help you get more done in your day.

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Rekindling the Spirit of VIRGIN ISLANDS FESTIVAL: A CALL TO ACTION

The 70th anniversary of the Emancipation celebrations in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) was meant to be a monumental milestone, a time to reflect on our rich heritage and the sacrifices of our ancestors. Yet, as we look back on the festivities of August 2024, we must ask ourselves: where has the excitement gone? Has the true essence of our culture been overshadowed by commercialism?

One of the central successes this year was the spotlight on local talent. The debate over featuring local versus overseas artists was finally settled, with many local bands and singers taking center stage. This shift not only highlighted the BVI's rich musical heritage but also fostered a deep sense of pride within the community. The performances by third and fourth-generation bands like Razor Blades were particularly heartwarming, reminding us of the deep-rooted musical traditions that have shaped our identity.

Yet, while we celebrate these successes, there are deeper issues at play that must be addressed. The village grounds, while vibrant, saw fewer booths than in previous years. Although traditional dishes like conch, whelks, and lobster were featured, we must ask ourselves if we are doing enough to preserve and promote our culinary heritage. Shouldn't at least 75% of the fare be local, especially for those who travel from afar, yearning for a taste of home? Our traditional dishes are not just food; they are a connection to our past, a way to preserve our cultural identity.

The communities of Carrot Bay and East

End excelled in their cultural displays, with traditional activities like donkey races, lime and spoon races, and plait pole dances drawing large crowds. However, other villages did not provide the same level of support. How can we ensure that these cultural practices are not just annual events, but integral parts of our daily lives? The youth, in particular, should be at the forefront of this cultural integration, learning not just about history, but about how to live and breathe their culture every day.

The need for a dedicated Emancipation Village was a recurring theme throughout the celebrations. Such a space would serve as a permanent home for plaques and tributes to honorees, ensuring that their contributions to the BVI are remembered and celebrated year-round. Our rich history deserves more than just a fleeting mention during festival season; it deserves a permanent place in our collective memory.

And what of our Emancipation service at the Sunday Morning Well? This historic site, where the proclamation of emancipation was read in 1834, should have been a unifying moment for our community. Yet, the low turnout, with the highest number of attendees from Cane Garden Bay, raises concerns. For a society

with strong Christian values, this service should have been a powerful reminder of our journey toward freedom, drawing in the entire community to honor the sacrifices made in the name of liberty. We must find ways to better integrate spiritual reflection into our celebrations, ensuring that they not only entertain but also enrich the soul.

As we look to the future, it is crucial that we challenge ourselves to do more. How do we break the culture of timeliness issues that plague our events? Why are we mixing cultures in the Virgin Islands, incorporating traditions like the "jab jab" from other cultures, instead of embracing and promoting our own? Our festival should be a celebration of BVI culture, showcasing the unique traditions that set us apart.

There is also a need to diversify the types of music and activities featured during our festival. Why do we only have one Gospel night? Why not include more fungi music or other genres like soul, country, and western? Our festival should reflect the broad spectrum of tastes and traditions that make up our community.

Lastly, we must ask ourselves: without the tourists and families returning home, how would we fund these festivities? Our festival is not just an event; it is a vital part of our cultural heritage, a way to connect with our past and inspire future generations. We need to ensure that it remains vibrant and relevant, not just for a few days in August, but throughout the year.

The 70th anniversary of Emancipation in the BVI was a celebration of our culture, history, and community. But it was also a wake-up call. We must commit, as a government



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and as a community, to participating in the betterment of these festivities. Let us ensure that our cultural expressions are woven into the fabric of everyday life, that the legacy of emancipation continues to inspire and guide us, and that the excitement, pride, and joy of our heritage are reignited for generations to come.

As we move forward, it is imperative that we not only preserve but also actively nurture our cultural traditions. The excitement and pride that once surrounded the Virgin Islands Festival should not be relics of the past. Instead, they should serve as the foundation for a renewed commitment to celebrating who we are as a people.

One way to achieve this is by reimagining how we engage our youth in these cultural activities. Schools should not only teach about history but also immerse students in cultural practices that extend beyond the classroom. Imagine weekly cultural workshops where students learn traditional dances, music, and crafts—not just as a history lesson, but as a way of life. Let's also consider creative ways to involve our youth in the festival itself,

it alive for future generations.

In terms of community involvement, we should strive to bring back the spirit of participation that once defined our festivals. The idea of a village competition, where communities compete for the best cultural display, could reignite local pride and foster a deeper connection to our heritage. These competitions could go beyond just decorating homes or floats, but also include storytelling sessions, traditional games, and exhibitions that showcase the unique history and culture of each village.

The Emancipation service at the Sunday Morning Well should also be reimagined to better reflect its significance. A broader campaign to raise awareness about the service, coupled with efforts to make it more accessible and engaging for all ages, could help ensure that it becomes a central part of the festival experience. Perhaps incorporating elements like a reenactment of the proclamation of emancipation or a procession to the well could make the event more dynamic and memorable.

Finally, we need to have a conversation about the direction of our festivals. Are we staying true to our roots, or are we losing sight of what makes the BVI unique? It's time to reassess the purpose of our festival and make a concerted effort to celebrate our culture in a way that is authentic, inclusive, and reflective of our identity. This means questioning the need for cultural elements that don't align with our traditions and finding ways to highlight the richness of our own heritage.

As we reflect on the 70th anniversary of Emancipation in the BVI, let us not forget that the festival is more than just a celebration—it is a vital part of our cultural identity. The government, community leaders, and residents alike must come together to ensure that our festivals are not only preserved but also revitalized. By embracing our culture in all its forms, we can create a festival experience that is meaningful, enriching, and truly representative of the Virgin Islands spirit.

Let's commit to making our festivals not just a time of celebration, but a powerful expression of who we are and what we stand for—a living testament to the strength, resilience, and creativity of the people of the Virgin Islands.



L&S
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Dr. Joycelyn D. Hoyte

ADORNING: “What’s Really Attractive?”

“It’s my money and my clothes. I can wear what I want.” If you publicly criticized someone’s attire, it’s expected that you may be met with this response.

I won’t disregard that everyone is entitled to their own preferences, nor will I say that trying to appeal to masses is worthwhile. Fashion and beauty are growing points of interest in our society, but I question, are these the lone tools that we should use to adorn ourselves? According to the Oxford Dictionary, to adorn is to “make [something] more beautiful or attractive”. Adorning eliminates the monotony and dullness of one’s appearance.

The purpose and use of adornment has been a longstanding debate amongst Christians and routinely, women are the primary subject. Popular

speculation argues that men are generally “more reasonably” dressed than women, while others believe that men don’t desire enhanced beautification the way women do. The supposed validity of these sentiments aside, women are oft the center of the adornment conversation. Consequentially, women are the recipients of pointed “codes of conduct”. There are denominations that give women a meticulous list of rules to adhere to: no makeup, no jewelry, don’t wear pants, and always make sure your arms and legs are fully covered. Some churches even disallow the use of wigs, weaves, hair pieces or dyes; accepting only what is natural. These legalistic approaches to righteousness, in many ways, are not true indicators of a relationship with God and are just conformity to denominational prejudices and poor exegesis of scripture.

Conversely, I must admit, that there are moments when I am left aghast at what some women wear. Some might joke that we’re marketing for the famous chicken company, advertising breasts, legs and thighs. The time where privates were kept private feels far gone. Nowadays, those who have eyes to see can see it all for free. It’s almost as if the shorter the better and the more revealing, the more appealing. Our recent emancipation celebrations in the Caribbean are a prime instance of this. The explicit costumes draw attention to all the parts we once tried to keep covered. While it may only be a small percentage of women adapting this way of dressing, it is evident that this liberal and provocative style is escalating; and as it rises, respect, and chastity are declining. I cannot speak about adornment and only focus on what is worn externally. If I did, I would have missed the mark, by only addressing the symptoms and not the source.

Instead of subjecting your likeness to the standard of influencers and the fashion/beauty industry, I encourage you to take advice from scripture. 1st Peter 3: 3-4 provides a transforming perspective of how we ought to consider adornment. “Your

beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is of great worth in God’s sight”. These verses accurately denote what is important in the sight of God; what I consider missing from society. The writer of these verses is not condemning beauty, instead he defines true value, and outlines God’s measure of worth in comparison to human priorities.

Let’s say a law was passed that mandated women to be modestly attired. Though it would change the physicality of our society, it would not change our internalized standards. 1st Peter 3:3-4 shifts our perspective to that which is internal and pleasing to God. True wellness is not just outward appearance. It’s about what we cannot see, that, which is not influenced by clothing, fancy jewelry, societal standards or money. It’s about living a life that is fully aligned with the moral and biblical standards of excellence and worth.

The fashion industry is a multi-billion-dollar industry. It portrays happy, glamorous and attractive models, but hidden under the makeup and smiles are hopeless, discontent, morally bankrupt people searching for true adornment. Today, many are adorned with the finest clothes and accessories, but their hearts yearn for greater, immaterial worth. To those yearning souls I say, an attractive life is not about what you tangibly have but who you are. Cultivating a meek and a quiet spirit in the sight of God is more valuable than any outward enhancement. Beauty trends are seasonal, but the value of a personal relationship with the Creator is eternal.

If you are yearning to be truly adorned, here are a few qualities that will keep your life filled with true, everlasting beauty:

1. Dress your heart with gentleness – Titus 3: 2 says “to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle and to show perfect courtesy toward all people”. To be gentle is to be compassionate and courteous,

kind to others and free from all harshness. If we were all more gentle, wars would cease, families would live without strife and evil would be stripped of its power.

2. Wear love as your brand – “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6: 27-28 NIV). Instead of focusing on the brand of clothing you wear, adorn your life with love. When we love we forgive, we do not kill, harbor grudges or hurt others with our tongue. Our world is in desperate need of this love.

3. Make peace your guard. “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all” (2nd Thessalonians 3:16). Jesus is called ‘The Prince of Peace’ and it is through Him you find true peace. Having peace does not mean an absence of trouble, it means that even amid our difficult times, we can be calm and secured.

4. Wipe away bitterness, anger and wrath. “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice” (Ephesians 4: 31). If we remove these, gang violence, fractured households, civil unrest and world decadence would halt. By ridding our hearts of anger, bitterness and wrath, we can beautify our lives with forgiveness, compassion and joy.

We lavish ourselves with fashion, jewelry, cosmetics, and other adornments, but these have not made our souls or the world any more beautiful. We’ve fixated on what we look like and have neglected thinking about who we really are. Enough time has been spent focusing on our appearance. It’s time for us to remodel our hearts with qualities that are valuable in the sight of God. Only by adorning ourselves with these values, will we understand what’s really attractive.

Training yourself to DISCERN

TEXT: HEBREWS 5:14

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a world of deception and fraud! From the church house to the marketplace, we are being deceived and defrauded. Satan is a master deceiver; his number one strategy in these last days is deception! One of the most urgent need for every individual and the Body of Christ, is discernment. It is the missing skill and gift that we can no longer do without.

Those who are not trained to discern good and evil, will be deceived and defrauded in these last days! How can we train ourselves to discern good from evil; right from wrong, the Spirit of truth from the spirit of error? The secret to training in discernment is revealed in Hebrews chapter 5:14.

The Holy Spirit has inspired me to challenge you to train yourself to discern. Before we can train ourselves to discern, we must first understand what discernment is.

I WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DISCERN?

One of the Hebrew words translated discern, means "to separate mentally." Another means "to scrutinize; to take knowledge of, to perceive." A third Hebrew word translated discern simply means "to know." From the Greek, to discern means "to discriminate; to judge between; to separate thoroughly."

Discernment, says best selling author, James W Goll, means: "having a place of perception

in your life- gained through meditation, study, and experience- that enables us to give wise counsel."

II WHAT ARE SOME OF THE DETERMINABLE REASONS WHY WE NEED DISCERNMENT?

Let me share with you five pertinent reasons why we need to train ourselves to discern.

First of all, we need discernment to know the difference between good and evil. We are living in a day and an age when men call evil good and good evil. Evil pretends to be good so that it will not be detected for what it is; evil. Those who are trained to discern will not be fooled by evil pretending to be good.

Secondly, we need discernment to distinguish truth from error; sound doctrine from doctrines of devils. "The Spirit says clearly that in the latter times some believers will desert the Christian faith. They will follow spirits that deceive, and they will believe the teachings of demons." (I Tim. 4:1; GWT) False teachers are speaking lies disguised as truth and are deceiving many. Only through discernment can we safeguard ourselves from such cunning deception, and be assured that our lives are based on sound doctrine that cannot be condemned.

A third determinable reason is that of knowing the source of revelation spoken to you.

Wisdom dictates before we run with a revelation or instruction, we should seek



Pastor Calvin Mills

to discern its source. Not everyone who says: "thus sayeth the Lord" is truly hearing from Him. We must not be gullible; we must seek to discern their true source. I think of the demon-possessed slave girl who followed the Apostle Paul and his colleagues shouting: "these men are servants of the most high God which show unto us the way of salvation." (Acts 16:17) This she did for many days until the Apostle Paul discerned her source of inspiration. Her words were true, yet she was speaking under the influence of demons and was sent to distract the Apostles from ministering the word effectively.

The Apostle Paul silenced her voice by commanding the demon spirit to come out of her.

When listening to spoken revelation or instruction we should seek to discern whether or not the speaker is under the influence of the Holy Spirit or demon spirits; or whether

he is speaking from his own mind.

A fourth determinable reason why we need discernment is that of safeguarding ourselves from being deceived. As said before, we are in the day or era of deception. Our Lord Jesus told us: "false Christ's shall arise, and false prophets, and will do wonderful miracles, so that if it were possible, even God's chosen ones would be deceived." (Matt. 24:24; LB) His warning to the twelve is also issued with us in mind. He tells us as He told them: "take heed that no man deceive you."

Isaac exercised his senses to safeguard himself from being deceived by his son Jacob. He was blind; and he knew that Jacob was Rebekah's favourite; and that both of them would seek to deceive him. Sure enough, upon him sending his firstborn, Esau, to hunt for venison and make him savory meat, at which time Isaac would bless him, Rebekah, his wife, heard his conversation and concocted a plan with her son, Jacob, to deceive Isaac and steal the blessing. More on this story in a moment.

A fifth determinable reason why we need discernment is that we may know the times and the seasons and what we should do in light of them. The children of Issachar were said to have had "understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." (I Chron. 12:32)

The Territory of the Virgin Islands is right now in the centre of what I deem to be our most crucial political season yet. With so many individuals and parties vying to form the next government of our country, we need discernment to know who is who: and to distinguish the ones whom God have chosen for this time. Many of us presently don't know who to vote for or which party to elect. If we would seek God in prayer and fasting, He would give us the ability to discern His hand-picked servants for the next House of Assembly.

The big question is: how do we train ourselves to discern what we need to know and do? This is the purpose of our next point.

III HOW SHOULD WE GO ABOUT TRAINING

OURSELVES TO DISCERN?

First and foremost, we need to be spiritually mature. The mature in mind train themselves by practice, to discern. More often than not, says James W Goll, "discernment operates through our senses and becomes strong in us through practice." We cultivate discernment by the habitual exercising of our senses. (Heb. 5:14) Most of us have five senses; sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. Some of us have cultivated a sixth sense known as the gut feeling. To distinguish sounds we must rely on our sense of hearing.

To distinguish one person from another, we often rely on the sense of sight plus sound.

To discern food and fruits we rely on the senses of sight, smell, and taste.

It is important for me to stress the fact that those of us who are born again and are spiritually mature, have spiritual senses equivalent to those in the natural. Through the Holy Spirit, God gives us the spiritual capacity to see, hear, taste, smell, and touch. We sing: "Open the eyes of my heart Lord... I want to see you." The Scripture says: He that has ears to hear let him hear."

Let me take you back to the story of Isaac and his sons. Rebekah assisted Jacob in adorning himself to deceive his father. Isaac was surprised to be greeted by one who claims to be Esau; knowing that he could not find and prepare his favorite meal in so short a time. He asked Jacob, who pretended to be Esau, "how is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?" Of course Jacob lied to him to cover his tracks. Isaac sought to know the truth by exercising his senses. He said unto Jacob: "Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not." (Gen 27:21)

He exercised the sense of touch as well as the sense of sound or hearing. It was tough for Isaac to discern the truth. He said: "the voice is Jacobs voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. He discerned him not and blessed him hoping that he was indeed Esau. Unfortunately Isaac did not rely on his sixth sense and was deceived. Jacob did a good job making sure he smelt like his brother. When Isaac exercised the sense of smell, he drew

his conclusion. "He smelled the smell of his raiment, and bless him, and said, see, the smell of my son is the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed." A sobering thought, is that we can practice discernment and still draw wrong conclusions.

Satan and those who are his subjects are so well versed in deception that if followers of Christ don't rely on the Holy Spirit to aid us in discerning, we would be deceived. We can't just rely on our senses; we must ask the Lord to help us to discern the true from the false; the right from the wrong. Joshua and the Israelites were deceived by the Gibeonites because they failed to ask counsel of The Lord before signing a treaty with them. (Joshua 9:11-16)

When cultivating discernment, we must not only rely on our natural senses. We must also practice to discern by exercising our spiritual senses in reliance on the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

We cannot afford to be gullible in the times in which we are living. Satan, his demons, and false prophets are at their best in deceiving people. We need to be at our best in discerning people and discerning spirits. I urge you to keep on growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Be among the mature who are exercising their senses to discern. Discernment is indispensable to making right decisions and safeguarding yourself from deception. Always rely on the Holy Spirit when activating your spiritual senses and ask Him to give you the gift of discerning spirits.

We may fail a few lessons in the beginning, but if we keep on practicing, we will get better and more accurate in drawing conclusions. Brother Lester Fahie is fond of saying: "The road map to success practice makes improvement;" I totally agree with him. Take the responsibility to train yourself to discern. Seize every opportunity you get to exercise your natural and spiritual senses, and always rely on the Holy Spirit when seeking to discern. What are you waiting on? Get into the gym of discernment.

Our roots run deep

“Cultural legacies are powerful forces. They have deep roots and long lives. They persist, generation after generation, virtually intact, even as the economic, social and demographic conditions that spawned them have vanished, and they play such a role in directing attitudes and behavior that we cannot make sense of our world without them.” Malcolm Gladwell

Over the last 25 years, these islands have become a melting pot of people coming from the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, the Americas, Europe, Africa, and as far away as Asia to make their home. Many of these new migrants are employed in the financial services, health services, and tourism industries, while others come in retirement to spend the winters in our Caribbean warmth.

Due to these new demographics, restaurants now cater for a wide variety of tastes, and dining out has become a culinary fusion experience. There is something for everyone and in the midst of all this diversity, Caribbean food has found its niche. It is no longer considered too heavy for European and American palates and our local chefs are well-trained and experienced, performing creditably in competitions abroad. But as we

look forward to a bright future in the foodie business, we need to also look back to our roots, assess our present and prepare for the Territory’s future.

Human migration is a principal method by which plant genetic material, cultural knowledge and practices have been diffused across the globe (Niñez 1987; Carney 2001; Carrier 2007). The study of this phenomenon is called ethnobotany and is defined as ‘a body of knowledge, practices, and beliefs about the relationships between people and plants, which is continuously evolving and is handed down through generations by cultural transmission’ (Ford 1994; Turner 1995; Ellen 2000; Nesheim et al. 2006).

For instance, research has shown that the African culinary influence on the Americas began long before the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The forced migration of Africans to the West began in the 15th century and continued until the mid-19th century,

spanning the Americas from Argentina in the South to Canada in the North, inclusive of the Caribbean Islands. This trade in people instigated a widespread culinary fusion in food preparation as the enslaved African women entered the kitchens of the plantocracy, forever changing the way people in the Caribbean ate. Incidentally, Caribbean cuisine would influence food preparation in areas connected to the transatlantic route such as Louisiana and South Carolina, as the experienced enslaved from the region were often sold on to plantations in the American South.

Although there is a recent desire of many Caribbean islands to retrieve and revive their West African heritage, until the early 1980s, Suriname had probably the best-preserved West African cultural patterns in the hemisphere. Suriname is home to the descendants of the Saramacca (who settled along the banks of the Suriname River),



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and the Djuka Maroons communities which formed in the early eighteenth century. The ancestors of the Saramacca were agricultural specialists from Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria, who cultivated an enormous array of crops introduced directly from their homelands, including moringa, which yields four edibles: pods, leaves, seeds, and roots; and sorghum, known as guinea corn in West Africa (which botanists confused with maize for a long time). Other popular crops included tamarind, legumes such as marama, Bambara groundnut (African peanut), cowpeas (black-eyed peas), locust and sword beans, as well as African eggplant. Their descendants continue to produce these crops well into the 20th Century.

Despite the rich agricultural history and tradition here and throughout the region, we in the Virgin Islands are now dependent on foreign goods to supply both locals and visitors. Any disruption in this supply chain will have a direct and disastrous impact on our food security.

As a country who experienced the ravages of a category five hurricane, we should pay close attention to the words of the retired Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Albert Ramdin, who said that “...the reality is that those who import simply do not have direct control over a significant percentage of their food supply, and are increasingly vulnerable to every change or disruption in external production.” Many of our grandparents and parents who experienced World War II in the 1940s could attest to Ramdin’s observation and found creative ways to preserve and prepare meals when their regular food supplies were unavailable. We need to find the same level of ingenuity and resourcefulness now.

Recently the Government of the Virgin Islands through the Ministry of Natural Resources, Labour, and Immigration published A Green Paper on Environmental Management Climate Adaptation and Sustainable Development for the Virgin Islands. This is a welcome step in the right direction, and it is hoped that it will be implemented without delay.

Emphasis should now be placed on local food production and fisheries, an accessible natural resource which should be carefully managed to ensure that the supply is not over exploited.

For us in the Virgin Islands, food and its preparation are deeply infused with social and cultural meaning. Our roots run deep in our West African traditions and those should always be the basis on which we create, preserve, and transmit our ethnic cohesion. It is hoped that these cultural traditions will not be lost as these islands become more and more cosmopolitan. It is incumbent on Government through the Department of Culture, as well as all of us, to ensure that our culinary traditions and our cultural relationships with food are kept vibrant and central to our daily lives.

LET'S TALK FESTIVE 70'S interior design

By: Kezia Allen



Photo by Marcell Lind Hansen

Step into a time machine and journey back to the vibrant 70s, where disco balls sparkled, shag carpets were a must-have, and lava lamps created a captivating ambience. Retro interior design trends are making a stylish return, and there's no better way to embrace this nostalgia than by reviving the iconic 70s home decor.

Let's delve into the vibrant world of retro interior design, discovering how you can bring the funky, joyful essence of the 70s into your home while channelling your inner disco star and transforming your home into a time capsule that celebrates the golden age of design.

BE BOLD AND WARM

Decor from the 1970s has a very endearing and upbeat quality. For home décor, the decade was genuinely exceptional, with vibrant hues and striking prints. Embrace the lively colours of the 70s by incorporating these bold and bright hues into your design. Think oranges, yellows, greens, and browns. This decade's uniqueness stems from its natural, earthy, and warm colour palette. Warm colours and textures instantly make a home feel cosy and inviting, creating a space you'll never want to leave. Brown and tan tones are key to capturing the 70s vibe. An earthy coat of paint is an affordable way to transform your space while adding moodier lighting can enhance the atmosphere and ambience.

FURNISHINGS AND SOFT FINISHES

Whether it's an egg chair, a cosy papasan, or the iconic peacock

chair, wicker furniture has roots that extend far beyond the 70s. If wicker isn't your style, a brightly coloured sofa can definitely bring in that funky vibe. The 70s saw an explosion of soft furnishings, offering a wider variety than ever before. Choices ranged from bold, graphic prints to florals and luxurious velvets. Adding a few scatter cushions can transform a modern sofa into a retro masterpiece. If you're hesitant about wallpaper, bold curtains can be a great alternative. You can also pair curtains with matching or contrasting designs for an even bolder statement.

ADD A TOUCH OF SHAG

In addition to the wooden panelling, shag rugs and elements are a hallmark of the 70's style homes, bringing a sense of fun and flair to any room. It adds to the cosy and nostalgic feel and creates an opportunity to bring in some funky patterns. These deep-pile carpets, often in vibrant colours, provided a plush, cosy texture underfoot, perfect for lounging. Shag carpets weren't just about comfort; they also made a bold visual statement, turning floors into a room's focal point. Whether paired with wood panelling, funky furniture, or psychedelic wallpaper, shag carpets created the ultimate groovy atmosphere that defined the decade.



Honestestreviews.com - Grandin Road



Net-A-Porter: Katie Berrington



Dazeyden

HAVE FUN WITH LIGHTS

Lighting was big in the 70s with all sorts of crazy designs. When it comes to lighting, think diffused glass shades in bold colours, mushroom-shaped table lamps, Sputnik chandeliers, rattan shades, or white milk glass, accented over a dining table, in the centre of a living room, or over a stairwell. These lighting concepts create an

impact and scream retro. Lights that can retract up or extend down are a useful addition when eating to create that authentic mood.

PLANTS OF COURSE

In the 1970s, houseplants became a defining element of interior design, reflecting the era's love for nature and vibrant, lush atmospheres. Popular plants included spider plants, ferns, philodendrons, and rubber plants. These plants were often displayed in macramé hangers, large floor pots, or as part of elaborate indoor gardens. Adding plants will bring texture and a touch of nature to your retro space. The lovely green pop can also add a lot of depth to even the smallest of spaces.

Festive 70's interior design was a delightful blend of bold colours, eclectic patterns, and natural textures that set a cheerful tone that was both lively and inviting. The era was known for its fearless mix-and-match approach to patterns, from psychedelic wallpapers to geometric prints, resulting in a dynamic and personalized aesthetic. This exuberant style made homes perfect for hosting festive gatherings, where the decor itself seemed to join in the celebration.

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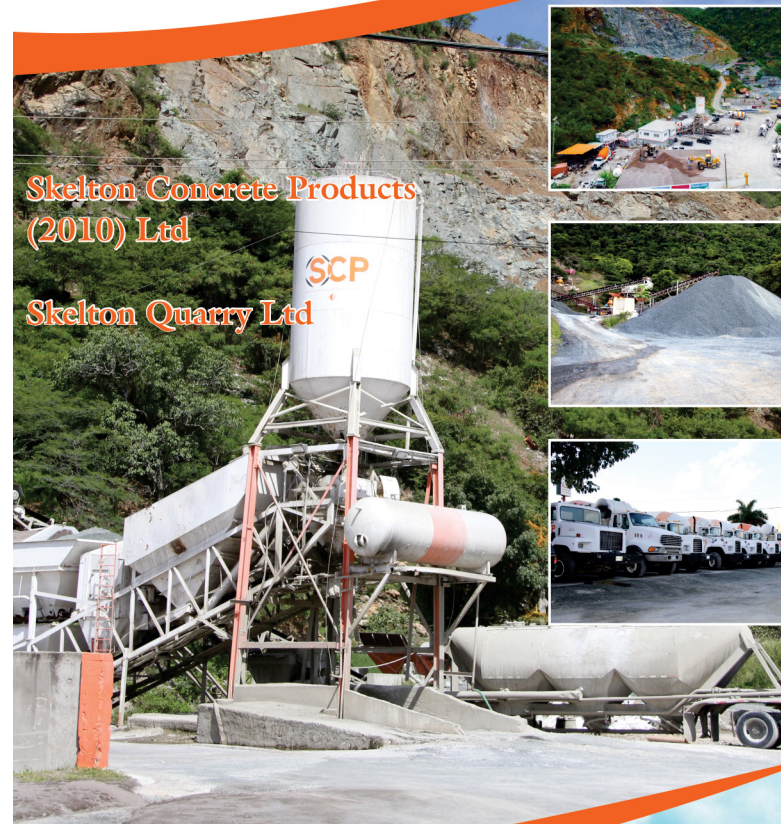
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