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JANUARY 2025 NO. 343
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ARC 2024 seen from the hills above Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, bound for St. Lucia

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On the Cover *Sophie Ingels, Sven Bruynooghe and their Great Dane, Snow, crew of — you guessed right —* Great Dane *(BEL), a Fountaine Pajot Sanoa 47, relax for a moment before heading across the ocean in the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers 2024. Photo by James Mitchell/WCC*

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Caribbean Compass

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To *Compass*:
The boat on your December cover was my family's.

I'm fuzzy on length, but I think *Equinox* was 33'. A LeCompte... '64 I believe? [Ed.: Gina is close. Equinox was 38' 3", built in 1967.]

During Hurricane Irma, a loose catamaran caught on her very secure lines. And after many hours pulling, it broke her loose. She ended up on shore, with just some minor cosmetic damage. We couldn't get any help to pull her off the shore as everyone was busy, and soon after, Maria mashed her up.

The Coast Guard took her to St. Croix to be crushed. She was an absolutely pristine boat. It was heartbreaking. We loved every bit of her and took very good care.

Gina Wellner
P. S. We are still paying on the loan for this boat. Crazy.

Hello Elaine,
Nice cover pic: I bought *Equinox* in 2008. She was being stored out of the water at Independent Boat Yard on St. Thomas and was in rather sad and neglected condition. Over the next few years I did a complete overhaul (interior and exterior) to bring her back up to yacht condition. I reluctantly sold her in 2013, when a family health emergency required me to relocate to the US mainland for an extended period of time. The fellow I sold her to, Kip Crew, was the owner when she was driven ashore at Coral Bay, St. John, in Irma/Maria in 2017. I have no idea what happened to her after that — I remember that she sat on the shore near Johnston's Bay for quite a while. That's the last I know of her.

She was a beauty, that's for sure.

All the best, David W. Knight Sr.

Below is a write up with her specs that I put together when I listed her for sale in 2013:

Equinox is a stunning example of a classic 1967 LeComte Northeast 38 MK II, designed by famed naval architect William (Bill) Tripp Jr. and Dolf LeComte, built in Holland to the highest Lloyd's standards and commissioned at LeComte's US headquarters in New Rochelle, New York. Only the highest quality materials went into the creation of the Northeast 38s. There were only 60 of these classic beauties produced between 1962 and 1970. With her sweeping sheer and graceful overhangs, Equinox exudes the same rakish elegance of her sister designs, the Hinckley Bermuda 40, and the Block Island 40. She is a true head-turner in any harbor.



December cover photo by Christian Wheatley

A joy to sail, *Equinox* is easily shorthanded and is perfect for a couple. She is quick and nimble under sail and is equally suited for leisurely day sailing, club racing, or long-distance passage making. She is in step-aboard-and-go condition, and has been thoughtfully set up for hassle-free Caribbean cruising by her current owner who has over 40 years of West Indies sailing experience. In the past, she has also proven herself as a popular day charter vessel, and she remains well suited for this purpose.

If you are looking for a sound and able cruiser, appreciate the fine lines of a timeless classic, and don't mind being the object of envy in every anchorage you visit, then this is your boat. *Equinox* is reluctantly offered for sale by her current owner who would like to purchase a larger vessel. She is home ported in a premium, well protected slip at a marina on the east end of St. Thomas, Virgin Islands — the gateway to the Caribbean. She is regularly cruised, receives ongoing maintenance and upgrades, and is hauled for service yearly. *Equinox* is loved and very well cared for. She is an exceptional vessel.



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A World Adrift

Sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor sent us this description of his newest underwater sculpture (read about Taylor's earlier work, Molinere Underwater Sculpture Park, on page 12 of the December 2023 issue — https://caribbeancompass.com/december-2023-caribbean-compass/).



JASON DECAIRES TAYLOR

One of the underwater statues is lowered into place

Nestled in the pristine northern waters of Grenada, the islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique have long been celebrated for their natural beauty and vibrant culture. Yet these islands have also become emblematic of the urgent realities of climate change — a truth devastatingly underscored in July 2024, when Hurricane Beryl, a Category 5 storm, left the islands reeling from its destructive force.

The underwater museum A World Adrift was initiated in 2023 to highlight the unique vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to rising sea levels, warming oceans, coastal erosion, and the mounting threat of extreme weather events. Tragically, the installation has now become a living testament to these themes.

A World Adrift showcases an evocative fleet of 30 boat sculptures, each navigated by a local schoolchild, symbolizing the uncertain waters of the future. These young figures, depicted as climate refugees, are not only poignant reminders of the generational stakes of climate change but also embody resilience, hope, and defiance.

The boats, crafted from marine-grade stainless steel and pH-neutral green cement, are styled as delicate origami vessels, capturing the fragility of island ecosystems. Designed to function as artificial reefs, these sculptures offer sanctuary for marine life and are symbolic arks in an era of ecological urgency. Sails bear global temperature data, while rigging doubles as coral and sponge nurseries to aid species recovery following storm-induced destruction.

At four meters deep, it is accessible to snorkelers and divers and is a short boat trip from the coastline of Hillsborough in Carriacou.

Youth Yacht Charter Employment Program Launched

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Sailing Association, in partnership with Blue Life Yachting, has created an "Introduction to the Yacht Charter Industry" program aimed at empowering young people with skills in this sector. The seven-month program attracted over 30 applicants, from which seven individuals were chosen to participate.

The participants are Rasheed Fraser, Scarlett Hadley, Antony Sayers, Paige DaSilva, CJ Pollard, Xavier Ollivierre, and Tavonte Forde, all aged between 17 and 21.

The program is designed to provide hands-on experience, one weekend each month, for seven months. At its conclusion, participants will have gained essential skills in business management and yacht charter operations as well as a foundation in yacht sailing and maintenance.

For more information, or to connect with these future industry professionals, contact the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Sailing Association svgsailingassociation@gmail.com, or Jenny Trumble, +1 784 593 9739.

BVI Film Excellence Awards Announced

Hakeem Gravesande emerged as the overall winner of the British Virgin Islands Film Commission's 284 Excellence Film Competition, capturing the Rhodni A. Skelton Production Award for Best Film for *Exit Wound*. Other winners: Best Actor & Best Soundtrack, Khalarni Rivers; Best Actress, Kassidy Chalwell; Best Music Video, Dominic Mathavious; Neil Blyden Memorial Award for Cinematography, Mathavious and Keano Brin; Best Screenplay and Best Directing, Mar Javierto.

—Continued on next page



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Film Commissioner Natalie O. Hodge said, "We are grateful for the support shown to our local filmmakers from the BVI community. We are committed to providing support and other avenues for exposure for our local filmmakers to continue to develop and grow in the industry as we are passionate about making a difference in the film industry in the BVI."

COURTESY BVI TOURISM



Team members from Exit Wound *flanked by Film Commissioner Natalie Hodge and Director of Tourism Clive McCoy*

New Planter installed in St. John Park

Work has been completed on the planter in St. John's Franklin A. Powell Sr. Park, sponsored by the Rotary Club of St. John, USVI, in partnership with Elroy Hill of the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation.

This collaboration aims to enhance the park's entrance with sustainable landscaping, benefiting both residents and visitors.

COURTESY ROTARY CLUB OF ST. JOHN



The new planter, flanked by Elroy Hill of the St. John Sports, Parks, and Recreation Department, and Teri Mandemaker, Celia Kalousek, Jennifer Stone and Tom Pullen representing the Rotary Club of St. John

The planter is situated at the park's front edge, near the ferry terminal, and the Rotary Club of St. John members will provide ongoing maintenance, including plant care, trash removal, and general upkeep.

USVI Charter Yacht Show Recap

Over 60 professionally crewed yachts were on display to brokers from the Caribbean, US, and Europe at the 2024 USVI Charter Yacht Show at Yacht Haven Grande St. Thomas November 8-11, 2024. The show's schedule included a carnival-style opening ceremony parade, a seminar series that included talks on coastal ecology, and mixology and culinary competitions.

The 9th USVI Charter Yacht Show, hosted by the Virgin Islands Professional Charter Association (VIPCA), will take place November 7-10, 2025. Registration information for boats and brokers will be announced at www.usviyachtshow.org

VIBE Returns to St. Thomas

VIBE, the Virgin Islands Boating Expo, returns to Yacht Haven Grande in St. Thomas on May 15-18, 2025, featuring new and pre-owned yachts, catamarans, sportfishing boats, luxury tenders, and cutting-edge marine technology for charter and purchase. Attendees can expect networking opportunities, seminars, and live entertainment.

Please visit vibe.vi, email info@vibe.vi or call (340) 642 0656

Marine Diesel Engine Maintenance Launched

Boat-tech experts and *Caribbean Compass* contributors Nigel Calder and Jan Athenstädt of BoatHowTo.com unveiled their Marine Diesel Engines Maintenance course at the November, 2024, METSTRADE Show in Amsterdam.

The course offers 11 hours of video lectures, organized in 63 lessons, explaining theory and practice with animated graphics and demonstrations on real engines in a workshop. The course is designed to build the foundational knowledge necessary for effective maintenance and troubleshooting. The teachings align with American Boat and Yacht Council (ABYC) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards.

The Marine Diesel Engines Maintenance course is now live and accessible through BoatHowTo.com. For more information, visit the website or write to info@boathowto.com.

SSCA Board Update

For the past three years, Joan Conover has been a member of the SSCA board of directors; she was recently re-elected to serve another term as president of the group. She has actively supported the growth and outreach of several key programs, including Clean Wake and cruising station hosts.

Her successful efforts reflect a team effort of SSCA board members including vice president Frank Smith, treasurer Don Gillings, secretary Mike Ogline, and members at large Bill Cullen, R. Neal Davies, and Bill and Kingsley Ross (past president) .

Activities such as the Bahamas Gathering at Black Point, a new conference venue at Half Moon Bay, California, and the ongoing support to hurricane-damaged islands in the Caribbean with teams from Hopefleet as well as the devoted cruising station hosts demonstrate that the group is staying current in support of cruising sailors. *For more about the SSCA, its people and programs, turn to pages 8 and 23.*

Pink Sunset Sail Raises Funds

The annual Pink Sunset Sail by Aqua Mania Adventures saw 230 participants raising close to $10,000 for two St. Maarten breast cancer awareness organizations, the Positive Foundation and Elektralyets Foundation.

Local businesses donated nearly 180 raffle prizes, significantly boosting the fundraising efforts. Many first-time breast cancer survivors, along with their families and friends, attended the event, which was led by Aqua Mania Adventures catamarans *Tango* and *Lambada*, joined by *Golden Eagle IV* from Out Island Charters.

COURTESY AQUA MANIA ADVENTURES



Island businesses donated nearly 180 raffle prizes, significantly boosting the fundraising efforts of the Pink Lady sail against cancer.

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Joan Conover's Clean Wake

by Jim Carrier



COURTESY JOAN CONOVER

Entering Bequia harbor, just about to take sails down ... but she was loving the wind!

When Joan Conover arrives at Fiddler's Green, the promised land for departed mariners, she'll look back on an earth better for her having sailed it.

Long before she took the helm of the Seven Seas Cruising Association, Conover was practicing one of SSCA's founding principles — leave a clean wake. On board, on land, and on the air, few have done as much as Conover to marshal the better angels of our privileged fleet.

On her first transatlantic in 2005 she and daughter Christina took daily dips of marine life — 160 samples — all the way to Portugal. They froze and shipped them to Old Dominion University to establish an ocean-wide baseline to gauge signs of degradation. Christina, a high school graduate at the time, became an oceanographer.

In years since, amid 35,000 cruising miles, Joan and husband, Greg, have helped organize sailors to improve lives, harbors, and communities in Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Dominica — tropical getaways that suffer from storms, flooding, bad sanitation, poverty, poor health, and the social and environmental impacts of first-world yachts.

In 2007, eleven years after joining SSCA, Joan took over administering Clean Wake and has made it a core focus of her presidency. "I liked their philosophy, written before any of the green or climate change issues were raised. It was obvious you need to protect the earth because we have a tendency to mess things up." The California sailors who launched SSCA in 1952 created Clean Wake Projects to promote both environmental and social stewardship.

Conover first went to sea as a 12-year-old crewing on her Norwegian grandfather's salmon fishing boat in Puget Sound. "I'm not afraid of big seas — not if you've been in an old leaky wooden trawler." After marrying Greg, an Army tank officer, adopting a special needs child who found water comforting, and being assigned to Fort Hood, she told him, "I'd like to get a sailboat because it would be a family activity we could all do — in the middle of Texas. Greg, who had not sailed before, called it 'the craziest thing.' Two weeks later we had a sailboat. Josh loved it." Stillhouse Hollow Lake, an Army Corps reservoir that borders the base, was ideal for their 22-foot daysailer.

Reassigned to the East Coast, they bought a used Morgan 41 and got their sea legs on the Chesapeake. In 1989, after Hurricane Hugo tossed around a 1976 Morgan Out Island 51 in the Isle of Palms marina in Charleston, S.C., they traded up for her with $50,000 in cash.

—Continued on next page



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—Continued from previous page

"Let me tell you a 1970s shag carpet is not good on a boat. It was orange and green — you'd get seasick when you came in." So they renamed her after a colorful, disheveled character in the musical Cats.

Built like a tank, so roomy it had a tub, *Growltiger* underwent a major refit: a 700-gallon a day water maker, a washer-dryer, autopilot, a generator, big house batteries, a replaced electric system and new running rigging before setting out on a transatlantic with their two college-age children and a mate in 2005. Over the years they've rebuilt the engine, replaced ports with stainless steel, replaced the hatches, sails, standing rigging, and more recently, the entire deck. The tub, she hastens to add, is used to store stuff.



COURTESY JOAN CONOVER

Growltiger*'s crew*

With a home port in Hampton, Virginia, and healthy retirement and savings accounts, the Conovers have been sailing back and forth seasonally to the Caribbean for 15 years. Josh and their Havanese show-dogs go with them. But unlike most cruising conversations that focus on Caribbean delights, a talk with Joan is peppered with good deeds they've had a hand in:

Moorings in Dominica's Saint Rupert Bay to reduce coral destruction.

Water filters, paint, shovels, stoves, and a Braille keyboard for a blind boy in Rio Dulce, Guatemala. Acting as a "pickup truck" to ferry supplies from Antigua to Dominica after Hurricane Maria. When a 2010 earthquake devastated Haiti, she used the internet, cell phones and her HAM radio to coordinate sailors who traveled there to help.

Joan, a plain-spoken woman with a broad smile, struggles to articulate where the drive to help comes from. But she speaks movingly of looking into the eyes of poor children — "kindred souls. They should be in advanced degree programs, and you know that's not going to happen."

Back home, her tall SSB antenna behind the house beams communications with SSCA's port hosts worldwide. And every fall, as cruisers gather around Cape Hatteras before heading south, she becomes a mother-hen/drill-instructor/geek-squad-expert to keep them safe. As a patent-holding systems engineer facile with radios, weather and terrain, she briefs rallies, and then stands by on various e-platforms to respond to inevitable calls for help.

Every year, boats set sail with "new-to-them" equipment — "wonderful little toys from a boat show" that Joan, from her radio room, helps troubleshoot. "I decided my give-back was to help people stay connected — if that meant the best satellite or tracking system, be it Iridium, inReach, Zoleo, Starlink, SSB, PredictWind — whatever they had — to make sure they could stay in touch. I don't think people realize how important it is from Hatteras down to the Virgin Islands to at least be in touch. Or be tracked."

In her seventies, Joan realizes she is getting to the end of her sailing years, and is working to pass the clean wake philosophy to a new generation of cruisers.

"I guess it's the human drive. A lot of us have it. Some don't. If we didn't have a focus of going in, and [finding] what we might do when we arrived, I don't know that I would be interested in going. I don't go just for the passage. I go for the experience after you get there."

For a list of sanctioned SSCA Clean Wake projects, go to www.ssca.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=710182&module_id=283986.

This article originally appeared in Cruising World *magazine.*



Kids Nature Quiz Winners Announced

The "Dutch Learners" team from Saba Sacred Heart on the island of Saba are the winners of the 2024 Big Live Nature Quiz — Kids Edition, an event which saw primary schools and young nature enthusiasts from Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten coming together to expand their knowledge of nature through learning and competition. The winning team will receive a sailing and snorkeling trip with their teacher, giving them the chance to explore the marine life around their island and deepen their connection to the environment.



COURTESY DUTCH CARIBBEAN NATURE ALLIANCE

The winning team from Saba

Over 480 students from across the six Dutch Caribbean islands participated in the live online quiz which focused on the theme "Nature's Locals, Newcomers, and Intruders," teaching kids about the unique ecosystems of the Dutch Caribbean and the importance of protecting their environments from invasive species.

Local champions from each island were:

- Aruba: Anne Droid from Colegio San Hose
- Bonaire: Yfke Kiara Ezrah Keke from Basisschool Aquamarin
- Curacao: de spiekende spinnen from Albert Schweitzerschool
- St. Eustatius: Flamboyant Sint Eustatius from Governor de Graaff Foundation
- St. Maarten: Adventure Kids from St. Dominic Primary School

MarAlliance's Human-Centered Approach to Marine Conservation

Since the late 1990s, the dedicated people behind MarAlliance have been leading efforts to safeguard endangered species and critical habitats through marine research, with local fishers at the forefront. The focus: understanding and protecting marine megafauna — the ocean's gentle giants like sharks, rays, and sea turtles. Through monthly monitoring expeditions, these fisher-conservationists help gather crucial data that inform marine protection policies.

The organization now works with over 30 fisher partners, many of whom have become conservation leaders in their own communities.

In one inspiring case, a seasoned fisherman joined the program and introduced his son, who has since become a core team member. Supported by MarAlliance, the young fisher is pursuing further education while continuing his conservation work. He also recruited a friend, extending the ripple effect of conservation education within his own community.

"Watching these guys go from fishers to leaders within their communities is one of our greatest achievements," says Kirah Forman, Belize National Coordinator of MarAlliance. "It's an incredibly proud moment for us to see them grow."

As climate change adds new challenges to marine conservation efforts, the value of long-term monitoring becomes even more apparent. Temperature changes and their impacts on marine life can only be understood through consistent observation over time.

The disappearance of whale sharks from their usual feeding grounds around Gladden Spit Marine Reserve serves as a stark warning. "We know whale sharks aren't in Gladden Spit anymore, which was a huge tourism income generator for local communities," Forman says. "But the bigger question is: Why? And what does their disappearance tell us about the health of our ocean?"

—Continued on page 14



Caribbean Airlines News

Caribbean Airlines has again been awarded the APEX (Airline Passenger Experience Association) Four Star Major Airline rating for 2024, based solely on the ratings of passengers worldwide. This marks the second year that Caribbean Airlines has achieved this distinction.

COURTESY CARIBBEAN AIRLINES



Caribbean Iere Mas J'ouvert band

Caribbean Airlines also announces the launch of Caribbean Iere Mas, its first J'ouvert band, as part of the airline's Caribbean Culture Program. The airline has also partnered with Angostura to introduce the Caribbean Iere Mix, a signature rum punch inspired by the flavors of the region. It will be served on board flights during the carnival season and available for purchase at the Caribbean Airlines Duty-Free Shop at the Piarco International Airport, Trinidad.

Doyle Caribbean Drives Sailmaking Industry Changes

The global sailmaking industry faces a generational shift as many experienced craftsmen approach retirement and fewer young workers enter the field, yet Doyle Caribbean is challenging this trend by becoming a beacon for new talent and innovation. The recent retirement of co-founder Dana Seymour, with decades of sailmaking experience, brought with it some challenges, but with nearly 50 sailmakers on staff, 42 percent of whom are under the age of 40, Doyle Caribbean is successfully setting a new standard for the future of sailmaking, thanks to Seymour's vision.

COURTESY DOYLE CARIBBEAN



Team leader Shakira Hinkson shows new general manager Skip Savoie the assembly steps on a set of Stratis Sails.

Doyle Caribbean stands out among worldwide sailmakers by investing heavily in skill development and creating an environment where young professionals thrive. Many former Doyle Caribbean sailmakers have taken their expertise to launch their own successful businesses or work in other sailmaking centers, reflecting the company's impact as a talent incubator.

"The sail making industry is at a pivotal moment," said Skip Savoie, the newly appointed general manager. "We are not just focused on preserving the craft, we're transforming it. By integrating the latest technology and attracting a new generation of skilled artisans, we're ensuring that our industry remains vibrant and innovative."

Savoie is spearheading initiatives that adapt to technological advancements and evolving industry structures. Under his guidance, Doyle Caribbean is embracing change and positioning itself as a global leader in sail production, from traditional craftsmanship to the latest in high-performance sails like Doyle's proprietary Stratis technology.

As the company continues to produce over 1,000 sails per year, its ongoing commitment to developing a younger workforce contributes to a thriving economy in Barbados.

Help for Galápagos Visit by Yacht

Visiting the Galápagos Islands is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and you should not miss a single moment because of paperwork or repair problems. Yacht Agents Galápagos, which relies on a local network, provides support, back-up and high-end quality yachting services so that you can have a stress-free cruise.

As a member of the South Pacific Sailing Network, cruising station host for the Seven Seas Cruising Association, and port officer for the Ocean Cruising Club, the mission is to ensure reliable service, efficiency with clearance formalities, and smooth entry into the Galápagos. Sailing vessels and yachts of any size are eligible for assistance. Incentive: A 10 percent discount to those interested in visiting the Galápagos who mention seeing this notice is welcome.

CMC Party Time

Organizers of the 7th annual Caribbean Multihull Challenge Race & Rally 2025 (January 29 – February 2) have planned eight parties with eight different bands, beginning with a reggae party at the Sint Maarten Yacht Club on Wednesday. Thursday sees a band and fireworks at Great Bay. On Friday Lolo will serenade guests in both French and English in Anse Marcel, and another French chanteuse will perform at a luau at St. Barth's Yacht Club on Saturday. Prize giving at the SMYC is capped by a closing party for all with "One White Chick and her Band."

Registration for the CMC racing and the rally is open at https://yachtscoring.com/.

New Location for Catamaran Brokerage

Catamaran Brokerage has moved to a new location at Lagoon Marina, Cole Bay, Sint Maarten. This location puts the business in the heart of the yachting industry, and close to contractors who are able to assist with yacht refit/upgrades.

COURTESY CATAMARAN BROKERAGE



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Contact Gwen at gwen@catamaranbrokerage.com or +590690842500 with any questions about buying or selling a catamaran.

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BVI Gem: Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina



Bold Beginnings

Imagine a visionary — a man with a dream so bold it redefined paradise. Supported by an energetic team of passionate minds, Joe Collier, along with his wife, Camille, set sail across the Caribbean, seeking untapped beauty and sustainable opportunity. This journey led them to Scrub Island, a pristine oasis just east of Tortola in the beautiful British Virgin Islands. Originally home to a single restaurant and a family residence, the allure of the island sparked curiosity. A short dinghy ride and a serendipitous dinner later, a transformative partnership was born, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Today, Scrub Island stands as a premier destination for families and couples, blending luxurious leisure with unparalleled investment opportunities. Designed by acclaimed architects OBMI and developed by Mainsail Lodging & Development, this exclusive island community seamlessly combines the sophisticated amenities of a luxury resort with the convenience and security of a self-sufficient residential community. Here, guests and residents enjoy exceptional service, stunning amenities, and a sense of sanctuary that's truly unmatched.



One Man, One Vision

What sets Collier apart from other skilled developers in the Caribbean? He's not only a developer; he's a storyteller, a creative visionary, and yes — a unicyclist! With 40 years of experience, Joe's legacy goes beyond groundbreaking projects; it's rooted in his commitment to hospitality and creating vibrant communities where his team thrives together. His belief in Scrub Island is shared by a family of residents, travelers, and those who simply seek a place to belong.

"We wanted to create more than just a beautiful destination. We envisioned a community where people feel genuinely connected — to the land, to the sea, and to one another. Scrub Island is that place and more," says Collier, resident and founder of Mainsail Lodging and Development.

Scrub Island welcomes everyone, from passionate boaters and adventure seekers to those looking for tranquil escape. The dedicated onsite real estate team is here to help you embark on this journey, with fully furnished offerings starting at $1 million.

The Best of Both Worlds

Welcome to your paradise, where natural beauty meets unparalleled lifestyle.

Formed by volcanic activity, Scrub Island comprises two pristine, private tropical islands connected by a narrow isthmus and boasting unmatched natural beauty. Covering 170 acres, Big Scrub remains largely undeveloped and boasts breathtaking 360-degree views of the Caribbean Sea and neighboring islands from its highest peak, which reaches 438 feet. At 60 acres in size, Little Scrub is the heart of the resort, featuring two restaurants, four bars, two sparkling swimming pools – one complete with epic water slide and swim-up bar, as well as a vibrant marina village with boutique shops, gourmet market, diving and sailing schools, fitness center, and, perched above it all, the iconic Ixora Spa.



The lively, full-service marina offers 55 slips available for lease or transient docking, including five for mega yachts up to 170 feet, and is a constant hub of aquatic action and energy. It can also proudly claim to be hands down the cleanest marina in the BVI, with crystal clear turquoise waters adding to its allure.

Scrub Island is fringed by three idyllic white sand beaches that shelve into the Caribbean Sea. The rest of the island's unspoiled coastline is peppered with protected coves, inlets and reefs fabulous for underwater exploration. This paradise is also virtually vehicle-free with resort shuttles serving as the primary form of transportation, maximizing the overall ambiance of perfect peace and tranquility.

Just off the shore from Scrub Island, uncover another 8-acre island gem that has experienced a stunning transformation, now proudly standing as Marina Cay Bar & Grill. Within this tropical oasis, indulge in Caribbean-inspired dining set against a breathtaking open-air backdrop with panoramic views of Tortola and its nearby islands. Managed by Scrub Island, Marina Cay is accessible to local residents, visitors, and resort guests via Scrub Island's private ferry.

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Carefree Investment

With over $150 million USD already invested, Scrub Island offers a select number of unique freehold real estate options that attract a wide range of investors worldwide. Scrub Island's exclusive real estate collection includes fully furnished turnkey marina village condominiums, a range of two- to six-bedroom luxury private villas complete with infinity pools, expansive grounds and all the comforts of home, as well as pristine homesites for the prospective dream home builder. All villas and condominiums have been constructed to the highest specifications, strictly adhering to Miami Dade high velocity hurricane zone building codes and standards. Each private villa has been thoughtfully positioned and designed to respect the contours of the land, maximize surrounding views and breezes, enhance natural light and shade to balance indoor and outdoor living, and to enhance homeowner privacy.

An established rental and property management program ensures that each property is impeccably cared for year-round by a dedicated on-site team. From reservations and bookings, travel logistics and transfers, personalized provisioning, housekeeping, private chefs, sensational spa experiences, and special events to bespoke care and upkeep of your unique investment, the resort has you truly covered.



A Safe and Stable Haven

The BVI boasts one of the most affluent economies in the Caribbean, supported by a flourishing financial services industry and booming tourism sector. While not immune to worldwide recessions, depressions, endemics, and wars, the BVI has weathered many a literal and figurative storm and emerged undefeated. The territory remains a global offshore epicenter, with more offshore companies registered than anywhere else in the world. Company incorporation costs and administration burdens continue to be comparably low, BVI companies are operationally flexible, and corporate governance can be adapted to suit structure. Caribbean real estate too has proven resilient to global market fluctuations, and investments remain relatively low leverage, further reducing financial risk.

A Credible Currency and Low Tax Regime

Despite being a British territory, the US dollar has been the legal tender of the BVI since 1959 with no plans to replace it in either the near or distant future. There are no exchange controls, which is a substantial bonus for US investors as this removes all risk associated with exchange rate fluctuation. There are also no constraints on the movement of dollar funds into or out of the country.

The BVI also remains a low-tax jurisdiction that appears on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's "whitelist" reflecting a high level of tax transparency, regulatory, and compliance standards. The BVI offers freedom from income, corporate and personal tax. In addition, there is no withholding tax, sales tax, value added tax, capital gains or transfers tax, estate duty tax, inheritance, or succession tax. Property taxes are nominal, although investors do pay a once-off stamp duty of 12 percent of the property value to the government upon purchase of either land of completed home.



Accessibility

While the BVI has typically been considered somewhat remote, access to the archipelago continues to become easier. June 2023 saw the start of regular, direct American Airlines flights from Miami, Florida, into Tortola's Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport. All other flights into the BVI connect through Puerto Rico, St. Thomas in the USVI, Antigua, and St. Martin, with continual improvements being made to each airport to enhance the travel and transit experience.

As for Scrub Island's specific location? Absolutely perfect. Exit airport customs and hop into your pre-arranged taxi which whisks you to a private ferry a mere two minutes away. Enjoy a 15-minute ferry ride with the balmy breezes in your hair and the sunshine on your skin and the sea air filling your lungs, and you will be met by the warm, smiling faces of the resort's hostess team. It simply doesn't get easier than that.

Outstanding Quality of Life

The year-round sunshine, temperate seas, and consistent conditions make for a life lived predominantly in salt water and fresh air. Scrub Island is an ideal destination for all manner of boaters, and boasts some of the world's best fishing, diving, snorkeling, kitesurfing, and paddleboarding. The waters surrounding Scrub Island are arguably the safest, most user-friendly in the Caribbean. The islands that make up the BVI archipelago are within close reach of each other, making for safe, line-of-sight boating for seasoned professionals and beginners alike. Time on land can be spent hiking, exploring unspoiled beaches, participating in year-round cultural events, wining and dining in an ever-expanding array of restaurants and bars, and dancing under the stars at regular festive events and beach parties.

An Ever-Changing Existence

Like it or not, our world was irrevocably altered by 2020's pandemic, and continues to be transformed by a changing climate, a growing population, declining resources, groundbreaking technological advancements, and shifting economic and political landscapes. Among all this uncertainty exists a continual search for stability, safety, and all things that support a better work-life balance, improved mental and physical wellness, and more meaningful relationships with those we love as well as our natural surroundings. Scrub Island offers all of this in spades. Why invest in Scrub Island? Why on earth not? *https://www.scrubisland.com/bvi-real-estate/ https://www.mainsailhotels.com/*

—*Continued from page 10*

Through a BZ$652,342 grant from the Belize Fund for a Sustainable Future (Belize Fund), MarAlliance continues its vital research. "It's a marathon, not a sprint," Forman says. "With species that live in the slow lane — those that don't reproduce or grow quickly — you often need more than ten years to understand trends. But many donors want quick results."

MarAlliance's vision extends beyond data collection to practical application. "If this research isn't informing policy, then it wouldn't make sense," Forman says. "Our mission is rewilding the ocean. We want to see more sharks, more fish, more turtles, more biodiversity."

As this work continues — monitoring, understanding, and protecting the marine ecosystems that sustain both wildlife and communities, one question remains: Will we commit to supporting marine conservation needed to ensure the survival of these species before it's too late?

By Chalsey Gill Anthony, communications officer, Belize Fund (abridged)

New Marine Protected Area for Puerto Rico

After 16 years of grassroots efforts, local communities in northern Puerto Rico are celebrating the creation of a new marine protected area (MPA), called *Jardines Submarinos de Vega Baja y Manatí.*



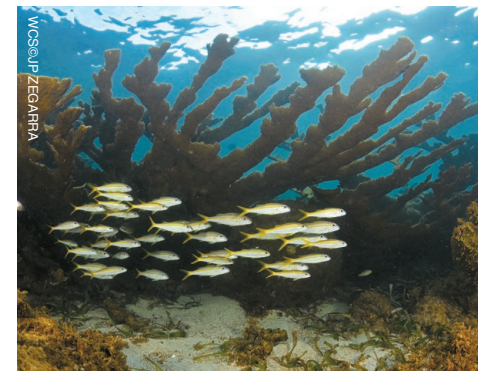
COURTESY MARALLIANCE

Whale shark

The newly-established MPA encompasses 202.7 km² (77 square miles) of coastal coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds and is home to more than 14 endangered species, including the Greater Caribbean Manatee. The area also hosts vibrant small-scale fisheries and a local ecotourism industry, and communities hope that new efforts to formally co-manage Jardines as an MPA will allow its waters to remain a source of food and income for local families for generations.

"This is a victory for the people," said Ricardo Laureano, leading member of Vegabajeños Impulsando Desarrollo Ambiental Sustentable (VIDAS). "These ecosystems nourish us and sustain our quality of life. It took 16 years of hard work, starting in 2007, to get here. Over the years, we rallied neighbors, knocked on doors, and engaged local and national leaders to highlight the critical need to protect this Reserve."

The conservation movement for Jardines was led by a coalition of several local groups spearheaded by VIDAS, including Puerto Rico Sea Grant, Sociedad de Ambiente Marino, Surfrider Puerto Rico, Para la Naturaleza, and supported by international partners like WCS.



WCS@JPZEGARRA

Jardines Submarinos de Vega Baja y Manatí

The next step will be the development of a co-management plan for the MPA.

"Our dream is for Jardines to be co-managed by the people who know it best — the local communities," said Mariela Declet-Perez, leader of Descendants United for Nature, Adaptation, and Sustainability (DUNAS). "We aim to create co-management agreements that balance sustainable resource use, conservation, research, and eco-tourism. This will take time, but we are committed to supporting VIDAS and our local partners to ensure long-term success."

As the coalition looks ahead, securing funding and scientific support for designing a participatory management process is crucial. A formal legal framework, co-management agreements with local agencies, and a recurring budget will be essential for the project's longevity.

Local leaders view Jardines as a lifelong commitment, and they hope their success inspires others to take action: "To other coastal communities around the world, our message is clear: Never stop fighting for your ecosystems," said Ricardo Laureano.

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CARIBBEAN

COMPASS

CALENDAR OF CARIBBEAN EVENTS 2025

Pull out and pin up the paper version, and use the version with live links at caribbeancompass.com/caribbean-events-calendar Plans change, so check with event organizers and see the updated calendar in each new issue of Compass.

EVENTS OVERLAPPING FROM 2024

Dec 13 2024-Jan 2 Sugar Mas Festival, St. Kitts and Nevis. Skncarnival.
Dec 14 – Jan 1 Montserrat Carnival
Dec 26 - Jan 4 Crucian Christmas Carnival, St. Croix, USVI

JANUARY



AUSTIN FRIEDLINE

January — Bequia Music Fest

1 Annual Festival Parade in Montserrat. visitmontserrat.com/festivals
1 Guloya Festival, San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic
1 Public holiday or 'recovery day' in many places (New Year's Day)
2 Ancestry Day, Haiti
3 St. Croix Crucian Carnival Adult Parade.
4 St. Croix Crucian Carnival Children's Parade.
3-4 St. Croix Crucian Carnival Food, Arts and Crafts Fair. stcroixtourism.com/christmas_festival.htm
6 Public holiday in some places (Three Kings Day/Epiphany)
6 Viking Explorers rally departs from Canary Islands. vikingexplorersrally.com
8 International Women's Day
10-19 St. Barths Music Festival. stbartsmusicfestival.org/festival
10-22 Barbados Sailing Week. roundbarbados.com
11 Start of World ARC, St. Lucia. worldcruising.com
11-12 Barbados Youth Dinghy Races. roundbarbados.com
11-2 Mar Aruba Carnival. visitaruba.com/things-to-do/aruba-events/aruba-carnival-season/
12 RORC Transatlantic Race departs Canary Islands bound for Grenada. rorctransatlantic.rorc.org
13 FULL MOON (Full Wolf Moon)
13-18 Panama Jazz Festival. panamajazzfestival.com
15 Antigua Yacht Club mini-regatta. antiguayachtclub.com/calendar
15-20 Cayman Cookout. caymancookout.com
15-21 Barbados Independent Film Festival. barbadosfilmfest.org
16-19 Fiestas de da Calle San Sebastián, Old San Juan, Puerto Rico
17-18 Rebel Salute, Plantation Cove, Jamaica. rebelsalutejamaica.com
18-19 Barbados Coastal Races, wingfoiling and kitesurfing. roundbarbados.com
18-19 Multiclass Dinghy Regatta, St. Maarten. smyc.com
18-20 Caribbean Midwinter Laser Regatta, Cabarete, Dominican Republic. caribwind.com
19-22 Gov't Mule's Island Exodus 15, Runaway Bay, Jamaica. islandexodus.com
20 Public holiday in Puerto Rico & USVI (Martin Luther King Day)
20 Painkiller Cup, Tortola, BVI. painkillercupbvi.com
21 Mount Gay Round Barbados Race. roundbarbados.com/round-barbados
21 Public holiday in the Dominican Republic (Our Lady of Altagracia)
22 Public holiday in Barbados (Errol Barrow Day)
22–5 Feb Mustique Blues Festival. basilsbar.com/whats-on/
23-27 ADN Bachata World Festival, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic
24-27 Spice Island Billfish Tournament, Grenada. sibtgd.com
24-28 Bequia Music Fest. bequiamusicfestival.com
25 Public holiday in Aruba (GF Croes Day), in Cuba (Birthday of José Martí) and in Cayman Islands (National Heroes Day)
25 Sandy Island Race, Antigua. antiguayachtclub.com/calendar
26 Public holiday in Dominican Republic (Duarte Day)
26 Latitude 18 Halyard Challenge Race, Tortola.
26-31 Grenada Sailing Week. grenadasailingweek.com
26-1 Feb Martinique Cata Raid. martiniquecataraid.com
27-3 Feb Havana Jazz Festival, Havana, Cuba. jazzcuba.com
30-6 Feb Viking Explorers rally arrives Grenada
31-2 Feb Caribbean Multihull Challenge. smyc.com/caribbean-multihull-challenge

FEBRUARY

2 World Wetlands Day. ramsar.org/activity/world-wetlands-day
7 Public holiday in Grenada (Independence Day — Grenada's 50th anniversary)
7-9 Jolly Harbour Valentine's Regatta, Antigua. jhycantigua.com
9-16 Holetown Festival, Barbados. visitbarbados.org/the-holetown-festival
12 FULL MOON (Full Snow Moon)
14 Valentine's Day Jump-Up, St. Croix
14-21 British Virgin Islands Food and Wine Festival. bvifoodandwine.com
15 Bocas del Toro Regatta, Panama. Bocasdeltororegatta.com
15-17 Kaaboo Festival, Cayman Islands. fetebookit.com/kaaboo/2025/
17 Public holiday in Puerto Rico & USVI (Presidents Day)
18-21 RORC Nelson's Cup Series, Antigua. caribbean600.rorc.org
21 Antigua 360 RTI Race, Antigua Yacht Club. antigua360race.com/
21-4 Mar Carnival Ponce, Puerto Rico
24-28 RORC Caribbean 600 race, Antigua. caribbean600.rorc.org
24-3 Mar Oyster World Rally stop in Grenada. oysteryachts.com
22 Public holiday in St. Lucia (Independence Day)
22 Dinghy Championship Hoedemaker Series Day 1, St. Maarten. smyc.com/dinghy-season-championship/
23 Public holiday in Guyana (Mashramani Carnival)
23-5 Mar Curaçao carnival
25 Public holiday in Suriname (Liberation Day)
26-5 Mar Trinidad Carnival week. caribbeanevents.com/event/trinidad-carnival/
27 Public holiday in Dominican Republic (Independence Day)
28-4 Mar Semaine Nautique Internationale de Schoelcher, Martinique. cnschoelcher.net
Entire month Carnaval Dominicano, Dominical Republic

MARCH

1-4 Carnival Barranquilla (Colombia)
2 Gran Marcha, Curaçao
2 St. Maarten Heineken Regatta Warm-up
2-9 Dancehall Week, Jamaica. dancehallweek.com
3-4 Carnival, Haiti
3-4 Mas Domnik, Dominica. avirtualdominica.com/project/carnival-in-dominica/
3-4 Carnival Carriacou, "Kayak Mas" (with Shakespeare Mas) socanews.com/carnivals/carriacou-carnival/
3-4 Trinidad and Tobago Carnival
4 Carnival, St. Barth
4 Public holiday in BVI (HL Stoutt's Birthday)
4-11 Superyacht Challenge, Antigua. superyachtchallengeantigua.com
5 Public holiday in many places (Ash Wednesday)
6-8 Virgin Islands Jam Fest, St. John. vijamfest.com
6-9 St. Maarten Heineken Regatta. www.heinekenregatta.com
8 International Women's Day
8 Ladyville Sailing Club Regatta, Belize
11 Public holiday in Belize (National Heroes' Day)
11 Public holiday in some places (Commonwealth Day)
12-16 SXM electronic music festival, St. Maarten. sxmfestival.com
13 Punta Cana International Music Festival, Dominican Republic
13-16 Moonsplash Festival, Anguilla. moonsplashanguilla.com
14 FULL MOON (Full Worm Moon)
14 Public holiday in in St. Vincent & the Grenadines (National Heroes' Day)
14-21 Easterval on Union Island, SVG. caribbeanevents.com/event/easterval-on-union-island/
15 Isle of Light Festival, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. isleoflight.com
17 St. Patrick's Festival, Montserrat
17 Public holiday in Montserrat (St. Patrick's Day). St. Patrick's Day Festival, Grenada
18 Public holiday in Aruba (Flag Day)
18 Good Friday
18-20 Oistin's Fish Festival, Christ Church, Barbados thetopvillas.com/collections/event/oistins-fish-festival
19 Crab Festival, Sainte-Marie, Martinique. azmartinique.com/en/events/crab-fair
20 Easter Sunday
20 Vernal Equinox
20-23 St. Barths Bucket Regatta, St. Barths. www.BucketRegatta.com
22 Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Emancipation Day)
22 Dinghy Championship Hoedemaker Series Day 2, St. Maarten. smyc.com/dinghy-season-championship/
22-23 Antigua Budget Marine Laser Open and Optimist Open
22-30 Yachtie Appreciation Week, Dominica https://paysdominica.com/yachting-festival-2025 http://www.sailopo.com/
23-31 St. Thomas International Regatta, St. Thomas, USVI sailracingacademy.org/tour/st-thomas-international-regatta-2025
30 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Spiritual Baptist 'Shouter' Liberation Day)
31–6 Apr BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Fest, including Nanny Cay Cup, Scrub Island Invitational, and Governor's Cup Race, Tortola. bvispringregatta.org



COURTESY SMYC

March— Grant Thornton Regatta, Sint Maarten


COURTESY DOYLE GUIDE

Les Anses d'Arlet, Martinique

APRIL

1-5 Vujaday Music Festival, Barbados. vujadaymusicfestival.com
1-7 Trinidad and Tobago Film Folklore Festival. ttfilmfestival.com
7-11 Oyster Regatta, Antigua
10–13 St. Croix International Regatta. stcroixyc.com
12 FULL MOON (Full Pink Moon)
13–19 Les Voiles de St Barth
13-21 St. Vincent & Grenadines Sailing Week 2025. svgsailingweek.com
16 Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Birthday of José de Diego)
16-21 Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta. antiguaclassics.com
18-29 Afro-Cuban Dance Festival, Havana. afrocubandancefestival.com
20-21 Festival Del Mar, Anguilla. anguilla-beaches.com/festival-del-mar-anguilla.html
21-27 Ritmo Cuba, International Cuban Dance Festival, Havana
22 Earth Day
22 Buccoo Goat Race Festival, Tobago. visittobago.gov.tt/festivals-events
23 Tobago Jazz Experience. tobagofestivalscommission.com
23-29 Jamaica Carnival.www.socaislands.com
26 Peters and May Round Antigua Race
26-27 Aruba Food Truck Festival
26-27 Corozal Bay Sailing Club Regatta, Belize
26–2 May Antigua Sailing Week. www.sailingweek.com
27 Public holiday in St. Maarten and Bonaire (King's Day)
27-3 May St. Thomas Carnival. visitusvi.com/carnivals-festivals/
28 Public holiday in Barbados (National Heroes' Day)
29 or 30 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Eid ul-Fitr, end of Ramadan)
30 Public holiday in Bonaire (Rincon Day)
30 St. Maarten-St. Martin Carnival. Carnival Day/Queen Juliana's Birthday public holiday in St. Maarten
30-3 May Anguilla Culinary Experience. anguillaculinaryexperience.com
30-4 May Vallenato Festival, Valledupar, Colombia. colombia.travel/en/fairs-and-festivals/festival-vallenato
30-11 May St. Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival. stlucia.org/en/jazz/

CARIBBEAN COMPASS

CALENDAR OF CARIBBEAN EVENTS 2025

MAY

1 Public holiday in many places (Labour Day)
2 Jump-Up, St. Croix
2-12 Cayman Islands Carnival (Batabano). caymanresident.com/cayman-carnival-batabano
3 Dockyard Day, Antigua. antiguanice.com
3-8 Romerias de Mayo, Holguin, Cuba. rove.me/to/cuba/romerias-de-mayo
4 Jazz 'n' Creole event, Dominica. dominicafestivals.com
8 Public holiday in Saint-Barthélémy (Victory Day)
9 Public holiday in Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saint-Barthélémy and St. Maarten (Ascension Day)
10 Start of ARC Europe rally from St. Maarten (or East coast USA) to Portugal via Bermuda. worldcruising.com/arc_europe
10-11 National Dinghy Championship, St. Maarten. caribbean-sailing.com/calendar/
10-11 BVI Dinghy Championship, Tortola. caribbean-sailing.com/calendar/#
11 Belize Cashew Festival & Agriculture Show, Crooked Tree Village. belizing.com/Cashew-Festival-and-Agriculture-Show-Belize/
12 FULL MOON (Flower Moon)
15-18 Virgin Islands Boating Expo (VIBE). https://vibe.vi/
15-18 Barbados Celtic Festival. facebook.com/barbadosceltic festival/
16-18 STYC Invitational Regatta, St. Thomas. stthomasyachtclub.org
20 Public holiday in the Cayman Islands (Discovery Day)
21 ARC Europe rally leaves Bermuda. worldcruising.com/arc_europe
22-27 FesTopia Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. festopia.com
23-26 Aruba Soul Beach Music Festival.
25 Keelboat Season Championship, Race Day Three, St. Maarten
26 Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI (Memorial Day)
29-1 Jun Martinique Boat Show. martinique-boat-show.fr
30 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Indian Arrival Day) and in Anguilla (Anguilla Day).
31 Out of this World Music Festival, Grand Cayman. ootwmusicfest.com

JUNE

1 World Reef Awareness Day
5 World Environment Day
5-8 Antigua and Barbuda Sport Fishing Tournament
7-8 St. Croix Sunfish Open. caribbean-sailing.com/calendar/
7-8 KLM Aruba Marathon. klmarubamarathon.com/en
8 World Oceans Day
9 Public holiday in some places (Whit Monday)
11 FULL MOON (Full Strawberry Moon)
15-21 BVI Wreck Week. bviwreckweek.com
18-22 International Choral Festival for Peace, Costa Rica. choralfestcostarica.org
19 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Labour Day). In some places, Corpus Christi.
21 Summer Solstice / Summer Sailstice
21 Lowell Wheatley Anegada Pursuit Race. www.royalbviyc.org
21 Fête de la Musique, all French West Indies
22 Keelboat Season Championship, Finale, St. Maarten
22-28 Regattas in the Abacos. regattasintheabacos.com
26-28 St. Kitts Music Festival. stkittstourism.kn/music-festival
26-1 Jul CayMAS Carnival, Caymans. caymas.ky
27-9 Jul St. Vincent Carnival "Vincy Mas." carnivaland.net/vincy-mas-st-vincent/
29 Fisherman's Birthday (International Fisherman Day), local boat racing in many coastal communities
30–6 Jul Fiesta del Fuego (Fire Festival), Santiago de Cuba


CHRIS DOYLE

Frigate birds off Barbuda

JULY

1 Public holiday in BVI (Virgin Islands Day) and in Suriname (Emancipation Day)
1 CARICOM Day, public holiday in 20 countries
1 International Reggae Day
2 Public holiday in Curaçao (Flag Day)
3-6 Love Fest, Costa Rica. lovefestcostarica.com
4 Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI (Independence Day), and in Cayman Islands (Constitution Day)
10 FULL MOON (Buck Moon)
10-13 Piña Colada Day and Piña Colada Festival, Puerto Rico
14 Public holiday in French islands (Bastille Day)
17-23 St. Lucia Carnival. www.carnivalstlucia.com
21-29 Mi Habana Baila Festival, Havana. mihabanabaila.com/en
25 Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Constitution of Puerto Rico Day) and Cuba (National Revolutionary Festival)
26 International Mangrove Conservation Day
28 Bonaire Eustatius and Saba Festival 2024
30-6 Aug Antigua and Barbuda Carnival. socaislands.com/antigua-carnival-2025/
30-5 Aug Barbados Crop Over Festival, including Grand Kadooment Aug 4. socaislands.com/barbados-cropover-2025/
Entire month Tobago Heritage Festival. visittobago.gov.tt/festivals-events

AUGUST

1 Public holiday in many places (Emancipation Day)
1-5 Dream Weekend, Negril, Jamaica. instagram.com/dreamwknd/
1-12 Grenada Carnival, 'SpiceMas.' spicemasgrenada.com
2-3 Caye Caulker Community Sailing Club Regatta, Belize
4-6 BVI Emancipation Festival
5 St. Kitts and Nevis Culturama Day. nationaltoday.com/culturama-day
7 Foxy's Hermit Crab Races, Jost Van Dyke, BVI. foxysbvi.com
9 FULL MOON (Sturgeon Moon)
11 World Steelpan Day. thereisadayforthat.com/holidays/various/world-steelpan-day
15 Feast of the Assumption
17 Great Race, Trinidad to Tobago. visittobago.gov.tt/festivals-events
28-1 Sep Caribbean Fest, Aruba
31 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Independence Day)

September

1 Public holiday in Puerto Rico and USVI (Labor Day)
6 Public holiday in Bonaire (National Day)
6-7 National Championship Regatta, Belize
7 FULL MOON (Corn Moon)
16 Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis (National Heroes Day)
19 Public holiday in St. Kitts & Nevis (Independence Day)
22 Autumnal Equinox
24 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Republic Day)

OCTOBER

1-6 Tobago International Cycling Classic. visittobago.gov.tt/festivals-events
6 FULL MOON (Harvest Moon)
13-20 KoSA Cuba Havana & Fiesta del Tambor. kosamusic.com/kosa-cuba/
14 Public holiday in St. Lucia (Thanksgiving Day); in Puerto Rico and USVI (Indigenous Peoples Day); in the Bahamas (National Heroes Day)
16-20 Drummer's Cuba Tour: Fiesta del Tambor
20 Public holiday in Trinidad & Tobago (Divali)
20 Tobago Blue Food Festival. visittobago.gov.tt/festivals-events
24 Creole Day (Jounen Kwéyòl), culmination of Creole Heritage Month, Dominica
25 Public holiday in Grenada (Thanksgiving Day)
25-27 Tobago Carnival. visittobago.gov.tt/festivals-events
26 Creole Day (Jounen Kwéyòl), culmination of Creole Heritage Month, St. Lucia
27 Public holiday in St. Vincent & the Grenadines (Independence Day)
27-3 Nov Havana Ballet Festival


TODD DUFF

Sea Life

NOVEMBER

1 Public holiday in Antigua (Independence Day), including the Antigua and Barbuda Independence Food Fair
1 Public Holiday in several places (All Saints Day)
3 Public holiday in Dominica (Independence Day)
5 FULL MOON (Beaver Moon – Super Moon)
7-10 USVI Charter Yacht Show, St. Thomas. usviyachtshow.org
20-23 Jolly Harbour Yacht Club Annual Regatta, Antigua. jhycantigua.com
27 Thanksgiving, US territories
28 Jump-Up, St. Croix
30 Public holiday in Barbados (Independence Day)

DECEMBER

4 FULL MOON (Cold Moon)
7 Cayman Islands Marathon. caymanislandsmarathon.com
12 Parade of Lanterns, Castries, St. Lucia
13 Public holiday in St. Lucia (National Day – Festival of Lights and Renewal)
15 Kingdom Day. Legal holiday, Bonaire
16-24 Nine Mornings Festival, St. Vincent. discoversvg.com
19-24 Parrandas de Remedios, Remedios, Cuba.
21 Winter Solstice
25 Public holiday in many places (Christmas Day)
26 Public holiday in many places (Boxing Day)
26 Maskanoo, Turks and Caicos. turksandcaicostourism.com
26-4 Jan Crucian Christmas Carnival, St. Croix, USVI
31 Nelson's Pursuit Race, Antigua. antiguayachtclub.com.
31 Festival Day, Montserrat. holidayscalendar.com/event/festival-day-in-montserrat/
31 New Year's Eve/Old Year's Night: Fireworks in many places. Public holiday in Cuba (Year End Celebration)

CARIBBEAN YACHT & SAILING CLUBS

AYC: Antigua Yacht Club, www.antiguayachtclub.com
BCC: Barbados Cruising Club, www.barbadoscruisingclub.org
BNSS: Bahamas National Sailing School, www.bahsailingschool.org
BRISA: Borinquen Island Sailing Association (Puerto Rico), www.facebook.com/BrisaSailing
BSC: Bequia Sailing Club, www.bequiaregatta.com
BYC: Barbados Yacht Club, www.barbadosyachtclub.com
CNIH: Club Náutico Intl. Hemingway (Cuba), yachtclub@cnih.mh.tur.cu
CNN: Club Nautique Le Neptune (Martinique), www.facebook.com/clubnautiqueneptune
CNM: Club Nautique du Marin (Martinique), www.clubnautiquedumarin.com
CNS: Cercle Nautique de Schoelcher (Martinique), www.cnschoelcher.net
CNSJ: Club Náutico de San Juan (Puerto Rico), https://clubnauticodesanjuan.com
CSA: Caribbean Sailing Association, https://caribbean-sailing.com
GYC: Grenada Yacht Club, www.grenadayachtclub.com
JHYC: Jolly Harbour Yacht Club (Antigua), www.jhycantigua.com
MBYC: Montego Bay Yacht Club (Jamaica). www.mobayyachtclub.com
PCYC: Petite Calivigny Yacht Club (Grenada), www.pcycgrenada.com
RBVIYC: Royal British Virgin Islands Yacht Club, www.royalbviyc.org
SLYC: St. Lucia Yacht Club, https:// facebook.com/stluciayacht
SMYC: St. Maarten Yacht Club, www.smyc.com
STYC: St. Thomas Yacht Club, stthomasyachtclub.org
SYR: Société des Yoles Rondes (Martinique), www.yoles-rondes.com
TTSA: Trinidad & Tobago Sailing Assn, www.ttsailing.org
WCC: World Cruising Club, www.worldcruising.com
WEYC: West End Yacht Club (BVI), www.westendyachtclubbvi.com
YCM: Yacht Club de la Martinique, facebook.com/ycmq972

NOTES

• All information is correct to the best of our knowledge at the time this issue of Compass goes to press — but plans change, so contact event organizers directly for confirmation. Please let us know, too, if there are any changes! tad@caribbeancompass.com

• A public holiday may be celebrated on the following Monday if a fixed holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

• If you organize a sailing or boating event not listed here that you'd like to have included in our calendars, please send information two months before the event date(s) to tad@caribbeancompass.com

• Look for events TBA in our online calendar, and in our monthly calendars. Always check the monthly calendars, as dates sometimes change.

The "Thornless Path" route to High-Season Fun

By Denise Simpson



COURTESY MARINA PUERTO BAHIA

You may want to head out to the beautiful Los Haitisies national park.

If you're heading south or north in winter/spring, or any other time of the year for that matter, why not choose the "thornless" route to the Dominican Republic made famous many years ago by Bruce van Sant in his classic *The Gentleman's Guide to Passages South*: *The Thornless Path to Windward?* Van Sant, now a longtime resident of Puerto Plata, laid out a plan for the thorny difficulties of harsh weather and rough seas, and has extolled the DR as hugely varied, affordable, and friendly. There's so much to see and do.

From December through April every year, many boats start moving down from Bahamas and Turks & Caicos. I've talked to many travelers over the years I have been based here, and have heard how the first sights they notice from afar are the beautiful massive mountain ranges. Once closer in, they experience the smell of the rich soil that anything can grow in, which explains why one can find very well priced local fruits and vegetables here year-round.

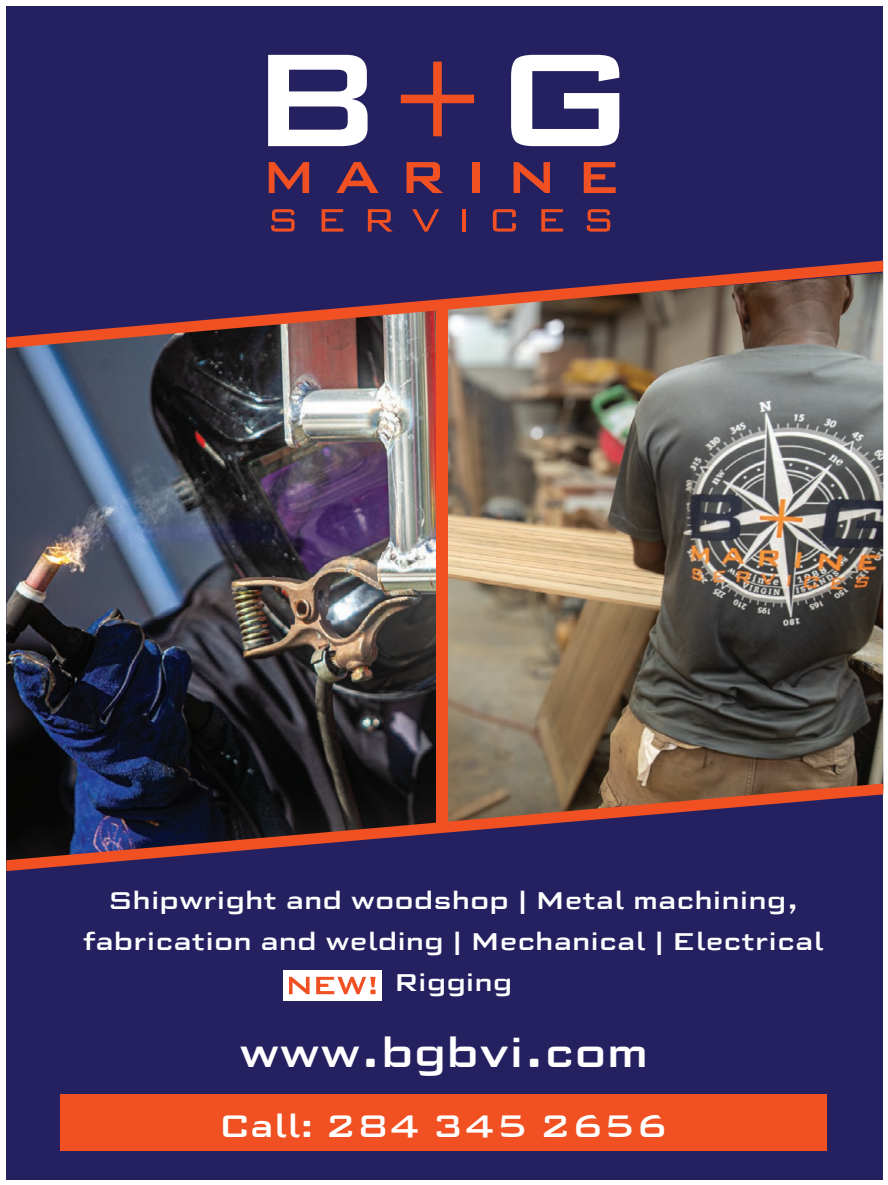
Check-in is easy and affordable. For example. at one of the DR's coastal service providers, Ocean World Marina, it costs approximately US$50 (RD$ 3,000) for three months entry for the vessel, and approximately USD8 (RD$ 500)/ per individual for a 30-day tourist visa (you pay a sliding-scale overstay fee on check-out via sea or air when you decide to leave). If you want to stay here, as many do, and keep on sailing the coastlines after 90 days, then speak to your marina to find out about the navigation permit extension for six or 12 months, and about getting a zarpe (a clearance document authorizing you to island hop, using the DR as a home base).

US vessels/crew sailing direct from US or a US territory (say Puerto Rico), you can enter the Dominican Republic without a zarpe/checkout and the armada/navy will welcome you, but if you are a non-US vessel entering from US, Puerto Rico etc., then you will need to check out there to provide paperwork on entry to check in here.

US and foreign vessels sailing direct from a non-US country must provide checkout papers from their last port of call, as is done anywhere else in the world.

—Continued on page 21






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—*Continued from page 19*

US and foreign vessels sailing direct from a non-US country must provide checkout papers from their last port of call, as is done anywhere else in the world.

As a backup to your chart plotting system, feel free to download the free Chart Locker Charts (thechartlocker.com) that include a toggle for satellite imagery kindly created by Bruce Balan. The charts can be run on Open Chart Plotter Navigation (www.opencpn.org), a free, open-source electronic chart display and information system for maritime navigation.



COURTESY MARINA PUERTO BAHIA

At any one time during the whale-watching season there are at least 300 whales in Samaná Bay.

Puerto Plata Carnival

During the weekends of February (usually Sundays) the vibrant carnival is celebrated in the main streets of most DR cities and towns, with each community adding its own twist, but all of them featuring flashy elaborate costumes and traditional masks.

Carnivals were first held in the Americas in the early 1500s. The Spanish conquistadors who settled here brought the carnival culture from Europe, though the Roman Catholic authorities of the time considered this to be a Pagan celebration, and therefore mixed Christian traditions into it and began to celebrate the event as well.

The celebration became a way to escape from the rigid religious traditions brought from the old world. By the late 1700s, the carnival had become a major celebration in the colony. Then on February 27, 1844, when the Dominican Republic won its independence from Haiti, the celebration grew even greater in popularity, as the country's Independence Day celebrations were combined into the pre-existing carnival celebrations. February 27 is still the most festive carnival night.

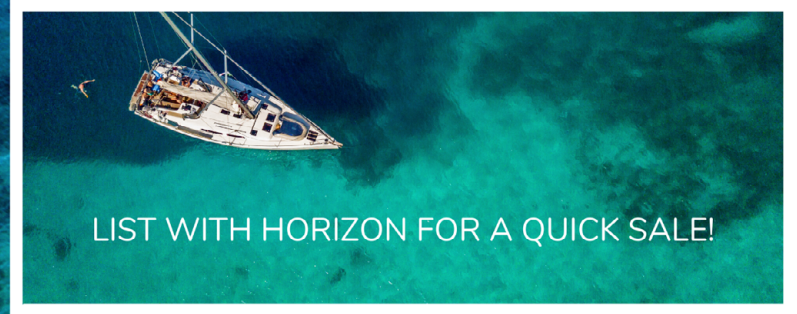
The carnival held in the city of La Vega is one of the largest and oldest in the country, going back to when the early residents of the island dressed themselves as Moors and Christians. It is thought that this colony, along with the one in Santo Domingo, was the first place in the Americas to have a pre-Lenten costume celebration. Now it includes the national parade and a large military display with the Dominican air force, navy, and army.

Puerto Plata carnival events are held outdoors during the daytime and in the open-air stadium at night. Carnival masks are elaborate, and the costumes used on the parades include satires of the Devil called *Diablos Cojuelos*. They dance and run to the rhythm of merengue music mixed with other Latin and Caribbean rhythms. Revelers flee from the *Diablos Cojuelos*, who try to hit them with vejigas. Other Dominican carnival traditions include *Roba la Gallina* and *Califé*.

Diablo Cojuelo (Limping Devil) is the main character of the carnival, by tradition a devil banished to earth because of his childish pranks. When he hit the earth he hurt his leg, causing him to limp. While most of the communities across the island represent this character in different ways, several common practices are the use of a mask, a satanic suit, sleigh bells and a whip or *Vejiga* (a bladder filled with air) to hit people in the streets (other *Diablos*). A Dominican tale claims that the mask represents the Spaniards who came to the island and enslaved and whipped the natives.

—*Continued on next page*

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—Continued from previous page

Roba la Gallina (Steal the Chicken): This festivity satirizes the fact that some people used to steal chickens from farms. This often consists of a man dressing up as a woman who just stole a chicken. This comical character often carries a large purse with candy inside for the crowd.

La Ciguapa: This female character comes out at night. She is naked with very long black hair, and her feet are backwards. She enchants the men she comes across.

Los Indios (The Indians): are a group of men and women dressed in the typical native Taino Indian attire. They travel together representing Dominican origins.



COURTESY OCEAN WORLD MARINA & MARITIMA DEL ATLÁNTICO BOATYARD

Ocean World Marina and Boatyard

For those who want to experience the carnival day and night in the mountainous and lush Puerto Plata on the Amber Coast, options include Ocean World Marina in Playa Cofresi, close to Puerto Plata. The marina welcomes members of SSCA, Salty Dawg Sailing, Ocean Cruising Club (OCC), and the Cruising Association, and offers a range of convenient services for sailors and their boats. Many other restaurants and cafes are a short walk away. Puerto Plata also has many repair facilities, plus transport companies that bring parts in quickly by air, as well as shipping ports.

Samaná Whales, a Sailing Regatta

After experiencing carnival and tourist fun in Puerto Plata, many sail or motor to Samaná, on the northeast coast, to see one of the world's most famous attractions, whale watching (the season is active January-March). Samaná Bay is the perfect place to watch the North Atlantic humpback whales who overwinter in this warm marine sanctuary before they begin their long migration to their summer grounds — as far away as Greenland and Iceland!

Whales are often sighted upon entry to the bay (the males seem to hang out around the outer edges of the bay, whereas the females and young stay in the middle, so try to avoid transiting the middle of the bay at all costs.) Some boats over the years have also reported that you can hear their beautiful whale mating songs down below on calm passages. Not all humpback whales travel in the same group, but at any one time during the whale-watching season there are at least 300 whales in Samaná Bay! With all those whales, it's more a matter of patience than luck, and you'll have ample chance to watch all sorts of behavior on display such as flipping, tail lobbing and breaching by the most active species of whale in the Atlantic.

Many vessels head on over to Marina Puerto Bahia, which can also arrange whale tours. Note that the marine sanctuary whale nursery in the center of the bay is heavily protected, so only licensed whale-watching boats are allowed to enter this area, and even these are heavily restricted. This tourism is what keeps the little town of Samaná alive as the town people only have a few months in the year to benefit from this. The marina welcomes associated partners including members of the SSCA, Salty Dawg Sailing, OCC, and the Panama Posse. It offers a range of amenities and services, including the only fuel dock on the northeast coast. The marina also hosts a sailing and dinghy regatta in March for those who plan to stay toward the end of whale season.

After spending time in Samaná, you may want to head out, carefully passing whales in the bay, to the beautiful Los Haitisies national park/hurricane hole.

Remember that for a thornless passage, you can't do better than to follow the trusted advice in Bruce van Sant's book, augmented by Chris Parker's Marine Weather Center services.

Sailors who use Facebook can join the Dominican Republic Cruisers & Boaters info group, which shares loads of up to date official entry info, navigational warnings, country-wide contacts/services and more, plus why Puerto Plata on the north coast has an excellent track record for many years of being safe from hurricanes due to the huge mountain ranges in DR, so the north coast only experiences tropical storms (I also cannot find any records of a direct hurricane hit).

Wherever you choose, I'm sure you will enjoy the DR. Here's wishing you a safe passage to and from this affordable, friendly, scenic, historically rich and increasingly popular tourist spot, home to many expats and boasting one of the Caribbean's fastest growing economies.

Denise and her daughter, Natasha Simpson, plus ship's cat Fritz, live aboard S/V Fair Lady, *a 1984 Morgan out-island ketch. Denise is an SSCA host, Ocean Cruising Club port officer and the Cruising Association honorary life host member.*





ULTRA Beryl Buckets of Love

Story and Photos by JoAnne and Bill Harris

On August 3, 2024, the "ULTRA Beryl Buckets of Love" initiative was born as part of our ULTRA Community Projects and our Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) Clean Wake program, to help the victims devastated by Hurricane Beryl in the Eastern Caribbean. We shared our Clean Wake Projects mission on Instagram and Facebook, rallying support from our extended community of cruisers, friends, family members, and locals.

During our free ULTRA yoga classes, many generous participants donated on the spot, and soon after, word spread and donations began arriving at *ULTRA*. Within a short time with posts on social media, we raised $500, and in a spontaneous moment of hope and encouragement, we asked if anyone would be willing to match this amount.



Ms. Winnie Harvey and volunteers prepare to distribute buckets

We were thrilled when our friends from Hope Fleet (hopefleet.org) stepped up, matching the $500 donation. With $1,000 in hand, our excitement grew as we planned the purchase and delivery of supplies desperately needed by the islanders. We contacted our friends Jesse James, SSCA Cruising Host and OCC Port Officer for Trinidad, and Danny Donelan of Savvy Sailing Grenada in Grenada, to see if they could help with the logistics of sourcing and buying the necessary items. Our list included 5-gallon buckets, gloves, hammers, galvanized nails, laundry and body soap, bleach or all-purpose cleaner, plastic tarps, feminine products, mosquito coils and repellent, toothbrushes, toothpaste, building tools, and much more.

Both Jesse and Danny were already deeply involved in relief efforts, but despite their commitments, Jesse managed to collect an additional $1,700. Additionally, we received a generous contribution from S/V *Pulpo* through PayPal, enabling us to purchase even more essential supplies like trowels, saws, levels, and other critical items.

With supplies secured, our next challenge was to find a vessel heading toward the affected area from Trinidad. Initially, Captain Joe of S/V *Pyrat Soul* volunteered to transport the supplies, but unfortunately, his boat experienced technical difficulties. We turned to our network and social media, and soon after, we connected with S/V *Dawdle*, crewed by Joe and Sara, who volunteered to carry the much-needed supplies to Union Island, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.



Captain Joe and Sara from S/V Dawdle *make a delivery.*

In a show of true community spirit, S/V *Pulpo*, with Lobo and Dano aboard, also volunteered to help transport any additional items. For over a month, we worked tirelessly via WhatsApp. Jesse James, along with Shawna aboard S/V *Minerva* and the rest of the team in Trinidad, coordinated with Ms. Winnie Harvey and her team on Union Island to ensure that the supplies would be successfully transferred.

Finally, the moment arrived when we received updates from Jesse, S/V *Dawdle*, and Ms. Winnie confirming that the supplies had safely reached Union Island. The joy of seeing (via video call) the buckets and other supplies being offloaded out in the harbor into small local boats and then brought to the dock and loaded into a truckbed to be transported to a safe haven for assembly was indescribable. We sincerely wish to thank the local officials for allowing such an easy transport and seamless delivery.

The next day Ms. Winnie contacted us via video call and we watched her distribute the buckets in real time along with her fellow distribution team leader, Mr. Cletus Forde.

—Continued on next page





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It brought tears of joy to both of us to see first hand the recipients of the buckets and tools and to hear their stories and how grateful they were to all who donated to help them during their time of great need. In addition to the buckets, coolers full of ice-cold bottled water and first aid kits were donated by Convoy of Hope. Each bucket, in keeping with our tradition, even had a handwritten tag from ULTRA Community Projects made by Ms. Winnie and her amazing team. These buckets and other supplies were more than just material aid; they represented hope and a step toward rebuilding lives.

Being from the Texas Gulf Coast, we know too well how devastating hurricanes can be with the tremendous loss of property, electricity, fresh water, provisioning and other basic essentials. On Union Island, almost all of the roofs were gone as well. In the islands it is especially difficult to get supplies, so we were extremely excited to play a role with these buckets. We have traveled up and down the Eastern Caribbean and are extremely familiar with and fond of these islands and the wonderful people. To see the islands and the islanders in this state is truly heartbreaking.

This entire endeavor would not have been possible without the outstanding support and guidance of SSCA's Board Commodore and our longtime friend, Joan Conover. We also extend our deepest gratitude to the entire SSCA team and members for their assistance and to every individual who contributed to this effort, from donations to hands-on involvement.

As SSCA Cruising Hosts and Ocean Cruising Club Port Officers for Honduras, including the Bay Islands, we are always committed to helping as much as we can, wherever we are.

Currently, we are excited to be working on installing a beautiful playground at a local school accessible only by water. We look forward to sharing updates on this project upon its completion.

If you are inspired by our work and wish to volunteer or support any of our ongoing projects, please reach out. You can follow our journey and see more of our work at Facebook: ULTRA Community Projects or on Instagram: #ultracommunityprojects. For those who wish to donate, please visit our PayPal at www.paypal.me/svultraharris or contact us for our Venmo details. Also, if you see us anchored out or in a marina, please come by and visit.

MERIDIAN PASSAGE OF THE MOON JANUARY 2025

Crossing the channels between Eastern Caribbean islands, an ebb tide carries you off to leeward and a strong flood tide creates lumpy seas, so crossing with a favorable tide is faster and more comfortable. The table below, showing the local time of the meridian passage (or zenith) of the moon for this month, will help you calculate the tides.

Water generally tries to run toward the moon. The flood tide starts running eastward soon after moonrise, continues to run east until about an hour after the moon reaches its zenith (see TIME below) and then ebbs westward. From just after the moon's setting to just after its nadir, the tide runs eastward; and from just after its nadir to soon after its rising, the tide runs westward.

The first hour after moonrise, the westerly current is barely negated. The second hour the flood tide is stronger, the third and fourth hour it's strongest, then it eases off in the fifth and sixth hours. The maximum tide is three or four days after the new and full moons.

January 2025	
DATE	**TIME**
1	1333
2	1427
3	1518
4	1606
5	1654
6	1741
7	1830
8	1921
9	2017
10	2116
11	2217
12	2318
13	0000 FULL MOON
14	0017
15	0110
16	0159
17	0244
18	0326
19	0406
20	0445
21	0525
22	0606
23	0650
24	0738
25	0830
26	0926
27	1023
28	1121
29	1217
30	1310
31	1401
February 2025	
DATE	**TIME**
1	1450
2	1538
3	1627
4	1718
5	1812
6	1909
7	2009
8	2109
9	2207
10	2301
11	2352
12	0000 FULL MOON
13	0038
14	0120
15	0201
16	0241
17	0320
18	0401
19	0444
20	0530
21	0619
22	0712
23	0808
24	0905
25	1001
26	1056
27	1148
28	1239

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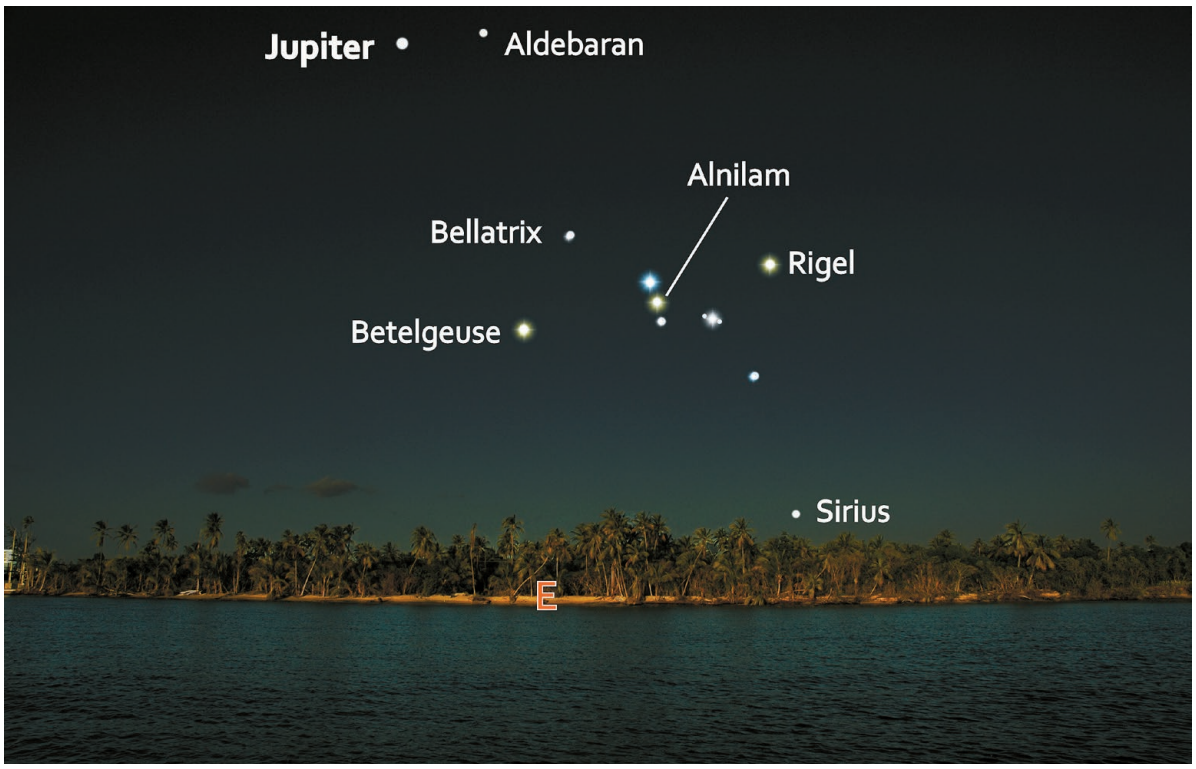
The Caribbean you're looking for

January Sky

By Jim Ulik

Having a rum (or beverage of choice) and contemplating the night sky may be a way to spend a happy hour whether you are on land, at anchor or enjoying a cruising holiday for a week. If you get away from bright city lights, the dark sky will reveal two meteor showers this month. Venus, Saturn, Jupiter and Mars can also be seen spreading out across the night sky. Every star you see is a distant sun with circling planets.

There were a number of major historical events relating to astronomy or space that occurred during this time period. One of these occurred on January 18, 1778, when Captain James Cook navigated to the Hawaiian Islands (sailing past Oahu and landing on Kauai) aboard the HMS *Resolution*. He discovered that the Polynesians had already discovered Hawaii.



JIM ULIK

Orion on January 1 contains four stars that are used in celestial navigation.

What does that have to do with astronomy and the sea? Celestial navigation. On that famous voyage William Bayly, the ship's astronomer, was equipped with a supply of navigational equipment and the chronometers used for time keeping to help determine longitude. Taking a sight of the Sun or Moon from the deck of a pitching and rolling boat is hard enough, but seafaring cultures around the world had used the stars for navigation for centuries. Imagine using a sextant for coastal navigation while charting Australia or New Zealand in 1770.

Bayly just happened to be part of a well-known voyage where he used celestial bodies for navigation and undoubtedly used the stars of Orion to navigate the sea. Even with Milky Way as a backdrop, Orion is the most brilliant constellation in the night sky, especially during the winter months. Because of the stars' brightness in this piece of sky, all ancient cultures used some combination of these stars, in whole or in part, that now makes up the constellation named Orion. Orion contains four of the 57 stars (58 including Polaris) that are used in celestial navigation. The four stars used are Alnilam, Betelgeuse, Bellatrix and Rigel. Look at Image One for their locations in the constellation.

—Continued on next page

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Alnilam comes from an Arabic word that aptly means "the String of Pearls." This star is the fourth brightest naked eye star in the constellation Orion and the 29th brightest star in the entire sky. It is growing in size and at some point will become brighter than Betelgeuse. On the other hand, Betelgeuse is one of the largest stars at four times the diameter of the orbit of Mars. It is one of the most luminous stars known, 7,500 times brighter than our Sun. The star is expected to explode into a supernova leaving Orion with a blown out shoulder. Betelgeuse is the second brightest naked eye star in Orion and the ninth brightest star in the sky. Bellatrix is the "Amazon" or female warrior star. It is the third brightest star in Orion and ranks in at 26 out of the entire sky. It is 7,000 times brighter than our Sun. Rigel shines 40,000 times brighter than the Sun. Rigel gets the trophy as the brightest star in Orion and it ranked seventh among all other stars.

Thursday, January 02 – Friday, January 03

The Quadrantids meteor shower reaches its peak. This above-average shower can produce from 60-200 meteors per hour. The central Caribbean will most likely see up to 35 per hour. It is thought to be produced by dust grains left behind by an extinct comet known as 2003 EH1, which was discovered in 2003. Meteors from this shower will radiate out of the northeastern sky after midnight. The shower is active December 26 – January 12.

Look in the southwestern sky after sunset. There you will find the fine crescent Moon located above or east of Venus. Saturn will also appear a few degrees off the dark side of the Moon. The bright object near Orion is Jupiter.



JIM ULIK

Catching a meteor takes patience.

Saturday, January 04

During the last 24 hours the Moon slipped through Aquarius crossing over Saturn. It has taken up position just above the ringed planet.

Monday, January 06

The Moon has reached First Quarter. It will rise just before noon and set just after midnight. This is a good time to observe the height of the mountains and depth of some craters. There are thirteen observable seas on the illuminated side.

Thursday, January 09 – Friday, January 10

Around 2100h* the Moon passes over the Seven Sisters as it makes way toward Jupiter. Tomorrow, January 10, the Moon will line up with Jupiter with the "eye of the bull" Aldebaran off to the right.

Venus reaches greatest eastern elongation from the Sun. This is the best time to view Venus since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the evening sky. Look for the bright planet in the western sky after sunset.

Monday, January 13

Tonight is the "Moon after Yule". The Yule or winter festival is over and this is the first Full Moon of the year. The Moon has also made a close approach to Mars. The Moon is one degree between both Mars and the twin star Pollux.

Thursday, January 16

The red planet will be at its closest approach to Earth and its face will be fully illuminated by the Sun. It will be brighter than any other time of the year and will be visible all night long. This is the best time to view Mars.

Saturday, January 18

Venus and Saturn make a close approach in the western sky this evening. The planets will be just over one degree apart and located in the constellation Aquarius.

Sunday, January 19

The Gamma Ursae Minorids meteor shower will be active January 15 – January 25. It will produce its peak rate of meteors tonight. The first shooting stars may appear beginning around midnight. They will radiate out of the north passing west of the Moon.

The Moon stays in motion for the balance of the month as it approaches Spica on January 20, moving on to Antares on January 24 and finally disappearing into the Sun on January 29. Mars holds its position near Pollux. Jupiter remains close to Aldebaran.

*All times are given as Atlantic Standard Time (AST) unless otherwise noted.





Saba: A Caribbean Wonderland

Story and photos by Lexi Fisher and Chris Doyle



A hike on Mount Scenery

As a sailing guide writer, one of the most frequent questions I get asked is "what island is your favorite?" which is incredibly subjective, of course, and a bit like asking someone to choose their favorite child. Each island has something unique to offer: dining options, great snorkeling and diving, safe and convenient anchorages, availability of technical services, and so forth. But inevitably, the conversation turns to Saba. Despite its lack of reliable or protected anchorages, it stands out as a destination for those who want to get off the beaten track and experience something truly special.

Saba rises from the sea like a fairy tale picture of a forbidden land. A mere five square miles, it reaches a lofty 3,084 feet. Tall cliffs of red, pink, and brown rise almost vertically from the sea. Houses sit perched in seemingly impossible positions on the edges of precipices. Ashore, it lives up to its image, for, if there was ever a hidden Shangri-la in the Caribbean, it is Saba.



Ladder Bay

Until the early 1940s Saba was almost inaccessible. Everything had to come and go via Ladder Bay. This extraordinary landing on the leeward shore provides scant shelter from ocean swells. Some 800 steps are cut into the rock. The steepness of the steps and their elevation can be appreciated from the sea by looking at the old customs house, which is only halfway up. Boats could only land when the sea was calm and even then, men had to stand waist deep in water to handle the cargo. Everything from the outside had to be carried up, including, at different times, a piano and a bishop. The Sabans were prepared to prevent invasions by keeping piles of boulders stacked behind wooden supports that were cut down when attackers were halfway up the hill. A road was built to Fort Bay in 1943, but with no port to shelter the bay, the island was still impossible to reach much of the time.

The roughly 1,500 inhabitants are descendants of hardy Dutch, Scottish, and English settlers, along with a few Africans who originally came as enslaved people. They have worked hard, side by side, to derive a decent living from this rugged land. They became great seafarers, fishermen, farmers, cobblers, and boat builders. In more recent times, women have become skilled in lacework. Sabans take great pride in their work and are unimpressed by obstacles. The two main villages in Saba are named The Bottom and Windwardside.

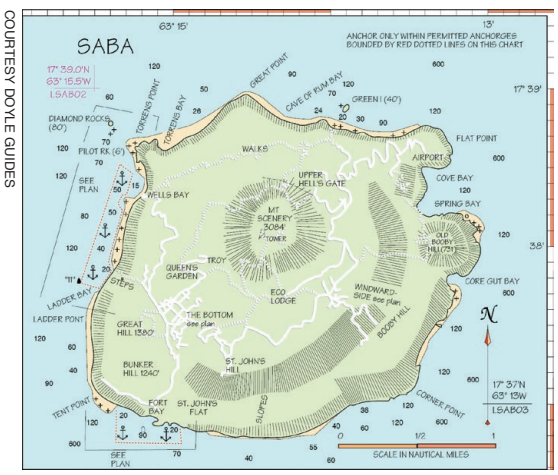


Freediving, Diamond Rocks

Up until the 1950s, the only way to get between the villages was to walk along a steep mountain track. Engineers came from The Netherlands and said the steep terrain precluded the possibility of a road. So Joseph Hassel, born in 1906, took a correspondence course in road building and the Saban people hand-built their road. It took them several years and it was finished in 1958. Dutch engineers similarly disparaged the idea of an airport. The Sabans called in Remy de Haenen, a pilot from St. Barts. He looked over their one flat-topped rock and figured landing might be possible. The Sabans flattened the area as much as they could by hand, removing big rocks and filling in holes. Remy landed, proving the feasibility of flying in.

Today Sabans have their airport, a road to the sea, and a tiny harbor. Despite its lack of beaches, Saba attracts visitors. Some come to go diving, rated among the Caribbean's best. Others come for a glimpse of this remote island, which developed in isolation, away from the mainstream of Caribbean life. The first surprise is the beauty of the island. From the sea it looks like a rock, but up high in the hills the views are spectacular. The island is spotlessly clean, with villages of whitewashed, green-trimmed, red-roofed cottages that look like they were plucked from Europe sometime in the 19th century. There are cobblestone streets, low stonewalls, and small stone churches. The people are honest, straightforward, industrious, and cheerful. They have a strong sense of community and there is very little crime.

COURTESY DOYLE GUIDES



A chart of the island, a la Doyle

—Continued on next page

—Continued from previous page

Saba is special. If you visit, you will never forget it. It is a nature island with many really lovely hikes, all generally well maintained. Some years ago Saba became part of the Netherlands. From a cruising perspective the result has been the creation of a whole new bunch of bureaucracy.


Ladder Bay

Industries include a small amount of tourism, the mining of gravel and sand from one of the hillsides near Fort Bay, and an international medical school whose students, when in residence, add about 30-50 percent to the population. This, plus the arrival of a few more visitors and the building of a few more hotels, has brought some changes: There are more shops and their stock is much more plentiful; restaurants are excellent and booming. There are even a couple of discos.

Saba is not the easiest of anchorages, though the addition of yacht moorings and a good dinghy dock in the port make it much easier than in days of old. A few bareboat charter companies make it off-limits for their guests. Those not allowed to visit by boat should consider going by airplane or ferry. The least expensive way is a ferry from St. Maarten, Statia, or St. Kitts. The Edge ferry from the Police dock next to the Simpson Bay Bridge, Sint Maarten, usually runs on Tuesdays and Fridays, but the schedule changes. If you want to stay a few days or are coming from Statia or St. Kitts, the Makana ferry runs from Bobby's Marina in Philipsburg, Sint Maarten, every day but Monday and Tuesday, from Statia every day but Wednesday and Friday, and from St. Kitts on Monday and Friday. You can book online at makanaferryservice.com. If you prefer to fly, check the WinAir schedule online.

If you have good weather and sea conditions and do decide to sail there, be aware that the island's parks authority, which maintains and controls the anchorages and moorings, is currently working with the Dutch government (and has been for the last eight months or so) on a new fee system, which may or may not be in effect by the time you get there.

Doyle Guides contain the Eastern Caribbean's most comprehensive and reliable sailing information, available in hard copy and online through a free mobile app, website, and Facebook group. (www.doyleguides.com).

Saba Entry and Exit Procedures

Ports of Entry:
Fort Bay (Fort Baai) Harbor is Saba's only port of entry. https://www.noonsite.com/place/saba/fort-bay-fort-baai/

Advance Paperwork:
While Saba uses SailClear, they do require additional forms that can be downloaded, printed and filled out prior to visiting the harbor offices to streamline check-in. See Noonsite's Clearance page for full details. https://www.noonsite.com/place/saba/view/clearance/ For many countries, a visa is not required. https://www.netherlandsworldwide.nl/caribbean-visa/visa-needed-caribbean

Entry Process:
All crew should proceed to the harbor office building to clear-in with customs and immigration and finally the harbor master. If C&I are not available, then the HM deals with all formalities. Yachts must also clear in with the marine park office nearby.

Exit Process:
The exit process is the same as the entry process. It's usually possible to clear in and out at the same time, even if you are staying a few days.

Rates:
Harbour fees are US$20-$40 depending on tonnage. There is a US$10 per person departure tax and nightly fees for the marine park. See a breakdown of fees on Noonsite. https://www.noonsite.com/place/saba/view/fees/.

noonsite.com

This information is provided by Noonsite.com, specialists in worldwide formalities for yachts, and was accurate at press time. Check https://www.noonsite.com/place/saba/view/clearance/ for more information and updates.



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