CARIBBEAN COMPASS

APRIL 2026 NO. 358

The Caribbean's Look at Sea & Shore

FATE BEYOND THE FINISH LINE

— TURN TO PAGE 22

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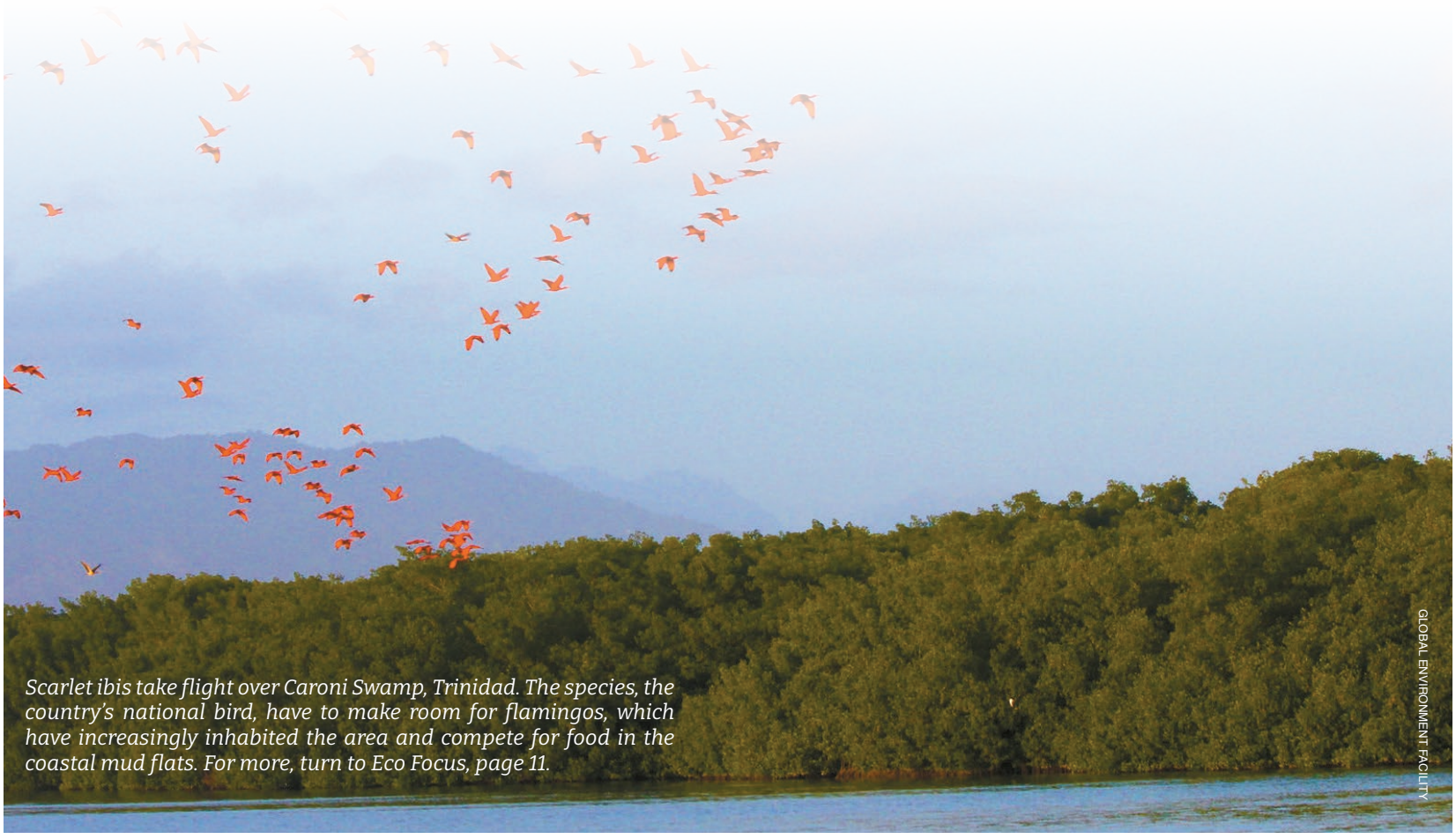
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GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Scarlet ibis take flight over Caroni Swamp, Trinidad. The species, the country's national bird, have to make room for flamingos, which have increasingly inhabited the area and compete for food in the coastal mud flats. For more, turn to Eco Focus, page 11.

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Find *Caribbean Compass* at caribbeancompass.com/pick-up

Find the 2026 Calendar at caribbeancompass.com/caribbean-events-calendar/

About the Cover *The celebrated Sparkman & Stephens yawl* Dorade *and her crew are no strangers to the Caribbean racing circuit, including class victories in the RORC Caribbean 600, Les Voiles de St-Barth, St. Maarten Heineken Regatta, BVI Spring Regatta, and the annual Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta. Over the years, her afterguard crew included the late Pam Rorke Levy, who co-owned the boat with her husband, Matthew Brooks. Brooks continues to campaign* Dorade *and saw his wife's memoir through to publication in late 2025. For the review of* Return to Blue Water *by* Caribbean Compass *executive editor Tad Richards, turn to page 22.*

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Caribbean Compass

Caribbean Compass is published by Compass Publishing LLC of Connecticut, USA. www.caribbeancompass.com

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ISSN 1605 - 1998

Channel 16

Marine Trades Grad Lands Job

Future Jobs Skills of Tomorrow, Inc. (FJSOT) has made its first job placement from the 2025 inaugural marine service technology pre-apprenticeship cohort. One graduate has been hired by St. Croix Marine Center, marking a key milestone in the organization's effort to build a skilled local marine workforce.



COURTESY FJSOT

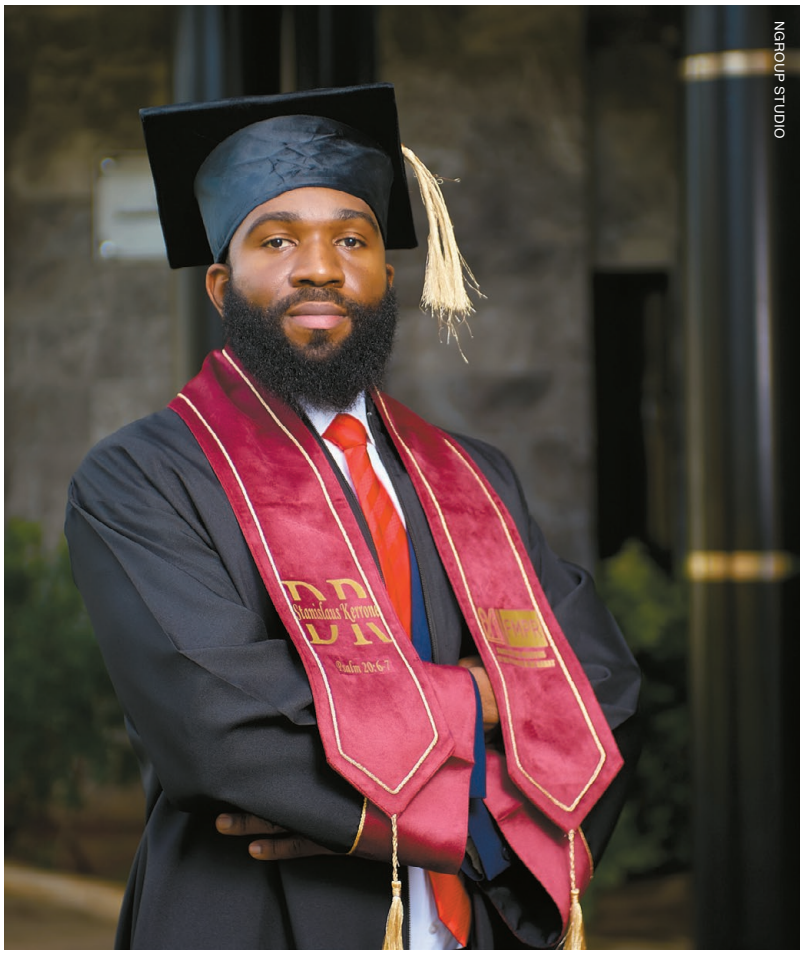
FJSOT graduates pose with diplomas.

"This first placement represents exactly what FJSOT was created to do — provide industry driven training that leads directly to employment," said Reuben Fenton, FJSOT president. "We are proud of our graduate, grateful to DOI for funding, and St. Croix Marine Center OJT for investing in local talent."

FJSOT is now working with additional marine employers to place the remaining graduates from the 2025 cohort.

Medical Doctor from St. Lucia Graduates

Kerrone Courtney Stanislaus has made history as the first St. Lucian, the first citizen of the Eastern Caribbean, and the first individual from the English-speaking Caribbean to earn a Doctor



NGROUP STUDIO

Kerrone Courtney Stanislaus, MD

of Medicine (MD) degree in the Kingdom of Morocco. He graduated February 2026 from the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy at Mohammed V University in Rabat after years of rigorous academic and clinical training, successfully defending a thesis on the role of physical exercise therapy in improving outcomes for cancer patients — a study that earned him the university's thesis graduation prize.

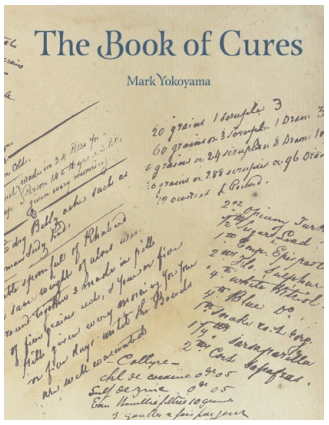
Stanislaus's achievement marks a milestone for St. Lucia and the wider Eastern Caribbean, strengthening educational ties with Morocco, which awards up to 20 scholarships annually to each OECS member state. More than 100 OECS nationals are studying in Morocco, including about 32 in medical and pharmaceutical fields. Stanislaus expressed gratitude to the OECS, its embassies in Morocco, and the Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation (AMCI) for supporting his studies, calling his accomplishment a testament to perseverance and expanding opportunities for Caribbean students.

—Continued on the next page



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Updates from Les Fruits De Mer, St. Martin



St. Martin's Les Fruits de Mer, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving and sharing the island's nature and heritage, has been busy on several fronts. They've delivered almost 4,000 copies of *J'ouvert* by iconic St. Martin artist and cultural figure Ruby Bute, in both English-French and English-Dutch editions, to students on both sides of the island. They've also published *The Book of Cures*, a collection of medical remedies and other useful information from an unknown 19th-century island resident, providing a unique window into life on St. Martin.

And … they need a car. After delivering nearly 50,000 books to island kids, theirs has come to the end of the trail. Anyone who has a car to donate, or knows a rental company that might sponsor a rental, should get in touch.

To help with a car. Email info@lesfruitsdemer.com or whatsapp +590 690 88 56 42. To buy the Book of Cures*: lesfruitsdemer.com/resources/books/the-book-of-cures-2/*

Virgin Islands Boating Expo Returns to St. Thomas in May

The Virgin Islands Boating Expo (VIBE) returns to Yacht Haven Grande Marina, St. Thomas, from May 14–16, highlighting the U.S. Virgin Islands as a multi-sport marine destination. Now in its third year, the boutique show brings together luxury yachts, charter opportunities, marine vendors, cultural entertainment, and seminars on yacht ownership and chartering.

COURTESY VIBE



TV angler Capt. Don Dingman offers fishing tips.

A new feature for 2026 is a series of free youth fishing clinics led by television angler Captain Don Dingman. Sessions on May 15 and 16 will offer hands-on instruction and complimentary rods and reels for registered participants. Members of the Virgin Islands Game Fishing Club will also be on hand to share information on local recreational fishing and conservation programs.

On the docks, attendees will find sail and power yachts from brands including Lagoon, Fountaine Pajot, Pursuit, Grady White, Bali, Tiara, and Axopar, with opportunities for tours and sea trials. Tickets are available at vibe.vi/tickets and include access to the Harbor360 Vendor Expo.

The Mafolie Hotel & Restaurant offers a 20 percent discount; use code VIBE for booking. mafolie.com or call (340) 774-2790. For full VIBE event details, exhibitor information, and sponsorship opportunities, visit vibe.vi.

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E Zone is a regional logistical service provider, with offices across the English-speaking Caribbean, and as such we have developed a strategic focus on offering logistical solutions within the YIT community. To this end, there are critical and essential points of information you (the Yachties) need to know and give us ahead of time. You see each island is different, and whilst the Customs laws in each island may be similar, the interpretation of the laws and regulations will differ.

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READERS FORUM



COURTESY BUDGET MARINE

Team Budget Marine aboard a Melges 24 during Antigua Sailing Week. Like other competitors, the crew may have to add sargassum to course considerations.

Another Racing Handicap: Sargassum

Dear *Compass*,

As the racing season in the Caribbean builds up steam, the news also includes a forecast of increasing amounts of sargassum floating toward the island chain.

When a racing boat catches sargassum on its keel, its speed is quickly reduced so that the boat is no longer competitive. Removing the sargassum from the keel is not easy. The only effective manner is to sail backward for a few meters and return to full speed.

There are a few methods to avoid this. A very small group of boats have tracks in their keels that can be pulled up and down and cut the sargassum away. It is also rumored that a very small diameter cord held under the boat can pull the sargassum off. A limited number of boats have small windows built into the hull to allow the crew to determine whether their reduced speed is due to sargassum.

Older boats had backward sloping keels which did not catch the sargassum. All the new race boats have vertical leading-edge keels that catch sargassum and do not easily let it go. The same applies to rudders.

It is of course possible for a crew to see the sargassum and to sail a course to avoid sargassum patches. However, that is easier said than done. Some patches are easy to identify but some do not float as high as others and avoidance is therefore much more difficult. The speed drop does not show on a meter and when crews discover that a factor outside of their control is causing them to lose a race, frustration is likely.

Racing sailboats successfully requires a high level of continuous concentration on a vast array of factors. The concentration challenge will be pushed to a higher level yet with the imperative of avoiding sargassum. Will this make the sailboat racing even more fun and competitive or will it take the level of frustration to an unmanageable level?

Robbie Ferron

BUSINESS BRIEFS

B+G Marine Services Features Blue Heron Battery

B+G Marine Services at Nanny Cay Marina in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, has been appointed the BVI dealer and official installer for Blue Heron Battery, a leading manufacturer and distributor of high-quality LiFePO4 (Lithium Iron Phosphate) batteries for marine, RV, golf cart and industrial applications. Serving the market since 2009, Blue Heron provides lithium batteries with industry-leading designs that are rugged, reliable, high quality and long life. The company offers a 10-year warranty on most of its products; however, batteries have a true 15-to-20-year life expectancy.

LiFePO4 is the safe lithium, with resistance to ignition. It is not susceptible to the hazards of lithium-ion batteries like those in cell phones, portable computers, or similar high-energy density applications.

Rum Flights Debut at Cardamom & Co.



COURTESY SCRUB ISLAND

Bar inside Cardamom & Co.

Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina, BVI, introduces a new rum flights program exclusively at Cardamom & Co., the resort's signature restaurant. The curated tasting experience invites guests to explore the depth and diversity of Caribbean rum.

Featured selections include Appleton Estate 21 Year, Mount Gay XO, Ron Zacapa 23, and Rhum Clément Cuvée Homère, alongside British Virgin Islands favorite Pusser's 15 Year. The themed flights allow guests to compare expressions side by side, creating a deeper understanding of the islands through flavor.

BlueMagic Car Rental

BlueMagic Car Rental provides ground transportation for vessels arriving at Port St. Maarten and the Simpson Bay Lagoon, supplying vehicles for captains, crew, yacht managers, and visiting guests. The company offers sedans, SUVs, vans, and other vehicles used for both personal transport and operational needs within the marine sector.

Opulent Luxury VIP Transportation operates alongside BlueMagic, offering chauffeur-driven services for the mega-yacht community. The service handles airport transfers through Princess Juliana International Airport, transport to private villas, and movements requiring added security or confidentiality. Drivers are trained, uniformed, and familiar with routes on both the Dutch and French sides of the island. *Reach BlueMagic at bluemagiccarrental@gmail.com.*



Fresh Slate of Winners, a Bright Future Ahead

By Herb McCormick

The eighth running of the Caribbean Multihull Challenge Race and Rally at the end of January saw some mishaps and recoveries, some solid favorites and some surprises.

There was no disputing the top boats in all three racing divisions. In CSA 1, Marcos Sirota's well-traveled Nigel Irens-designed trimaran, *Sophia*, was class champion and Most Worthy Performer. In CSA 2, the Rapido 40 *Spike* topped the leaderboard in a race that became a war of attrition as shifting winds took their toll. And in the ultra-competitive Diam 24 class of sporty trimarans, Miha Krumpak's *Fastnet* outlasted the fleet.



Sophia, *a Nigel Irens-designed trimaran, was not only the CSA 1 class champion, it was also deemed the regatta's overall winner.*

Of course, the racing is only part of the CMC's mission. So, too, is the rally, which this year attracted four boats for a spin around St. Maarten's inviting bays and anchorages, and an overnight visit to St. Barth's. Among the many rally festivities, one of the best, said skipper Ron Boehm of the 52-foot cat *Little Wing*, was the time trial predicted-time pursuit "race" that was ultimately won by the all-woman Team Island Water World. To be clear, it's not a "race" at all.

"Back in my home yacht club in California, the pursuit races are the most popular events," said Boehm. "It's super safe, there's no starting line and it's open to everyone. You sort of estimate how much time the rabbit gives to the turtle. Everyone likes to play catch-up. It's a great way to promote more participation, which is really the point of the rally. It's great to have a non-racing option. But there's still competition. Let's go catch that guy!"

—Continued on the next page



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ANDRE KNOL/FLY WITH DEDE

In CSA 2 class, a team of monohull racers from the BVI aboard the Rapido 40, Spike*, maintained poise in a division wreaked with havoc to top the leaderboard.*

When all was said and done, however, perhaps nobody enjoyed the regatta more than first-timer Thomas Kassberg, the skipper of the ORC 50, *Malolo*, who wrapped up a solid CSA 1 series with a second in the final race. Kassberg, from the Pacific Northwest region in the US, previously sailed Melges 24s and J/105s in Oregon before commissioning his 50-foot cat.

"When we decided to get into multihull sailing, we wanted the speed and excitement but also felt more comfortable with cats than tris," he said. "I think we made the right choice. It's been a super fun boat."

Super. Fun. He might just have described the eighth running of the CMC Race and Rally. The best part? The ninth CMC is already scheduled for 2027. See you there.

The St. Maarten Yacht Club will host the ninth annual Caribbean



ANDRE KNOL/FLY WITH DEDE

In the ultra-competitive Diam 24 class of sporty trimarans, Miha Krumpak's Fastnet *outlasted the fleet in a tight 12-race series.*

Multihull Challenge Race and Rally February 4-7, 2027. The event is open to all multihull sailors on racing catamarans and trimarans as well as chartered cats and cruising multis. For more information visit www.caribbeanmultihullchallenge.com.

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Exploring Changes at Trinidad's Caroni Swamp

By Jeniece Germain

Did you know that conservation officials in Trinidad and Tobago have observed an increase in the number of flamingos at the Caroni Swamp over recent years?

Cari-Bois Environmental News Service spoke to representatives of the Forestry Division's Wildlife Section, and Nanan's Caroni Bird Sanctuary Tours, to learn more about changes within the swamp and highlight the need for the public to understand the importance of conserving its biodiversity.


COURTESY LISA SORENSON VIA BIRDSCARIBBEAN

The increase in flamingos is not affecting other species like the scarlet ibis.

More flamingos at the Caroni Swamp

A research assistant at the Forestry Division's Wildlife Section, Tevin Butler, said flamingos have been observed at the swamp since the 1980s but their current numbers are higher than average.

"Within an eight-year span, we have started to see the increase in population," he said. "While their numbers remained around 100 in previous decades, recent surveys by the Division have reported approximately 600 birds."


COURTESY WINSTON NANAN'S CARONI BIRD SANCTUARY TOURS

A flamboyance of flamingos observed at Trinidad's Caroni Swamp

Of the six species of flamingo that exist worldwide, the Caribbean flamingo — which is native to the region and ranges from Venezuela to Florida — calls the Caroni Swamp home.

While non-migratory in nature, flamingos are known to fly long distances in search of food or to reproduce.

Like the scarlet ibis (Trinidad and Tobago's national bird), flamingos obtain their color from the carotenoid-rich food they consume — shrimp and crabs — which are found in coastal mud flats like those at the Caroni Swamp.

Butler told Cari-Bois that the relatively sudden rise in the number of flamingos at Caroni may be due to disturbances in their previous habitats in neighboring territories. As a result, they may have moved to Trinidad for new feeding and breeding grounds. But Butler cautiously noted that the root causes for their shift in location remain unknown. Even though an increase in population is a good thing, balance within ecosystems is important and it is fair to question if the increase in flamingos affects any other species at the swamp or the availability of food/resources.


COURTESY ANIMAL FACT GUIDE

Caribbean flamingos develop their distinctive color from eating shrimps and crabs.

But Nanan's Caroni Bird Sanctuary Tours guide, Khemraj Bhagan, said that the flamingos are existing harmoniously in the swamp especially with their famous neighbor, the scarlet ibis. Bhagan explained that the ibis roost in the foliage of the mangroves while flamingos remain on the mud flats where they feed and sleep.

While the increase in flamingos has been welcomed, the growing presence of mussels at the swamp is more bothersome.

Bhagan told Cari-Bois that a species of small, black mussel has been rapidly multiplying on the roots of the swamp's red mangroves. His concern is that these mussels are "taking over the oysters," referring to the mangrove cupped oyster which is found at the swamp and is a local street food.

The mussel appears to be the charru mussel, which has been reported in the Gulf of Paria since the 1950s. But whether their increasing numbers is posing a threat to the oyster fishery, or by extension the swamp, needs to be further researched.

How humans contribute to changes at Caroni Swamp

The reduction in human activity during the Covid pandemic was thought by many to be nature's "well-deserved break from our presence."

But recent studies revealed that this anthropause (coined by Dr. Christian Rutz of St. Andrew's University) had a double-sided effect on species conservation. While some species benefited from limited disturbance at the Caroni Swamp, others may have suffered from the lack of human protection, with the spectacled caiman being one of these species.



Tour guides at the Caroni Swamp are observing increasing numbers of charru mussel, which is globally known as an invasive species.

Victor Nanan, director of Nanan's Caroni Bird Sanctuary Tours, has observed what he considers to be a significant decline in spectacled caiman sightings.

Before the pandemic, Nanan said tour guides may have seen one to two caimans per week. Since recommencement of tours in 2022, sightings of these caimans have been limited.

As top predators, caimans are vital in regulating the populations of prey. If not regulated, an overabundance of prey species can put pressure resources within an ecosystem.

Nanan said that the decline in spectacled caimans at Caroni Swamp was likely due to increased poaching during pandemic lockdowns. He noted that poaching — especially of the scarlet ibis for meat during the Christmas season — is an ongoing problem that needs to be addressed through more patrols at the swamp and greater enforcement of environmental laws.

—Continued on page 13


COURTESY EMPEROR VALLEY ZOO

Sightings of spectacled caimans have decreased since Covid-19.


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—Continued from page 11



Workers respond to an oil spill near the Caroni Swamp in August 2022.

Oil Spill Near Caroni Swamp

In August 2022, a truck accidently spilled diesel in the vicinity of the Caroni Swamp and Nanan said that it contributed to mangrove die-off along the swamp's entry channel. While efforts were made by authorities to clean the spill, the fuel could not be contained and made its way into the entry channel which resulted in the die-off.

The Caroni Boardwalk

To commemorate World Wetlands Day, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries opened the Caroni Boardwalk. Free of charge to the public, the boardwalk extends into swamp and gives the public a waterfront view of the swamp's many natural attractions, including the Scarlet Ibis.

The Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Farook Hosein, addressed the event and explained that the boardwalk was created to allow visitors greater accessibility to the swamp, especially for those unable to participate in boat tours.

COURTESY MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES



The Caroni Swamp Boardwalk extends into swamp and gives the public a waterfront view.

COURTESY MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES



A section of the Caroni Swamp Boardwalk

The Forestry Division's Conservator of Forests, Denny Dipchansingh, said in his address that plans to expand the boardwalk have already been approved by the Public Sector Investment Programme.

There are also plans to restore the birdwatching tower at the swamp. The Ministry touts the projects as efforts to improve accessibility to the swamp to "deepen the public's connection with nature and underscore the importance of wetlands to human well-being."

This article was originally published by the Cropper Foundation's Cari-Bois Environmental News (www.caribois.org/2024/09/exploring-recent-changes-at-trinidads-caroni-swamp).



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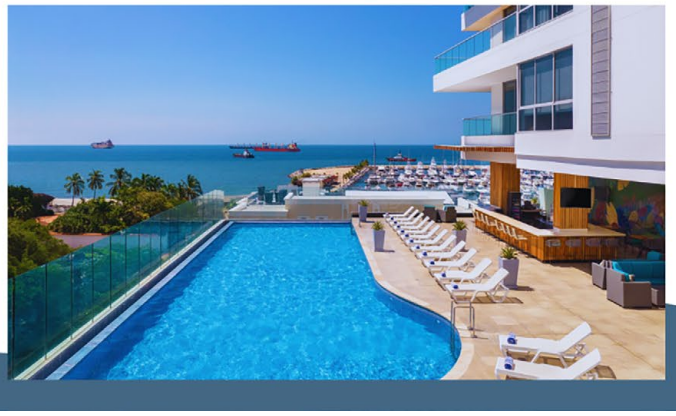
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PARTNER CONTENT

Tax-Free Caribbean Yacht Ownership with Charter Management That Keeps You Sailing

Tax-free yacht ownership in the Caribbean isn't a "someday" daydream. For many sailors, the route to ownership is to buy tax-free in the Caribbean, then place the yacht into a managed charter program to help offset costs while still enjoying personal cruising.

For first timers exploring this path, the best results come from working with an independent operator who can handle everything from initial enquiry to final handover and yacht management. Horizon Yacht Charters, established in 1998 at Nanny Cay, Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, with a base at Blue Lagoon Marina in St Vincent & the Grenadines, serves owners seeking a seamless purchase-management-usage pathway to own and sail in the Caribbean.





Independent guidance is a critical part of buying a yacht. Sometimes, the yacht you think you want may not be the one that truly suits your needs. Horizon's yacht sales team, made up of sailors with decades of Caribbean cruising experience and deep knowledge of the charter industry, helps buyers find the best fit for their plans and budget.

For anyone buying new, Horizon has longstanding relationships with major manufacturers. It is the authorised dealer for Nautitech Catamarans and Bavaria Yachts in the English-speaking Caribbean and sells Lagoon, Fountaine Pajot and Excess catamarans, as well as Jeanneau, Beneteau and Dufour yachts at factory-direct pricing, for private use or charter management in its BVI and SVG fleets.

For buyers looking at used yachts, Horizon's evolving brokerage listings open worthwhile opportunities, especially when guided by a team that understands both ownership goals and charter suitability.

Horizon's structured charter management programs address the realities of dockage, insurance, preventative maintenance, guest turnarounds and seasonal servicing, while the yacht earns revenue between owner trips.

Options include a performance-based "maximum income" program and an "active management" program that has passed IRS review, offering owners substantial tax advantages when running the yacht as a for-profit business. Both offer owners unlimited sailing. Horizon recommends consulting a CPA or tax advisor and can connect prospective owners with specialist guidance. If an owner later decides to keep the yacht in the United States, they can import her and pay import tax on the depreciated value at that time.

The performance model appeals to owners who want the opportunity to earn more than a fixed return while also enjoying sailing time. That access helps turn ownership into a lifestyle: fly in, step aboard, and go, whether for a week in the BVI, a cruise through the Grenadines, or a longer, island-hopping passage. With advance planning, owner-use models can also support training weeks, rallies and regattas before the yacht returns to charter service.

For buyers comparing models, Horizon's Try Before You Buy option credits a charter fee toward purchase.

The takeaway is simple: combining tax-free purchase with professional charter management and real owner access, Caribbean yacht ownership becomes less of a pipe dream and more of a repeatable way to sail the region on your own schedule.

For more information on charters or tax-free yacht ownership, visit horizonyachtcharters.com.



My Weather Router – How did we start?





My Weather Router delivers personalised daily weather forecasts and routing advice directly to your yacht while on passage — giving you clarity, confidence, and support when you need it most.

The service was founded over 15 years ago by Charlie Carlow, a professional skipper and RYA Ocean Yachtmaster with more than 100,000 logged nautical miles. His journey into weather routing began mid-Atlantic, when his sister, aboard the yacht, Scarlet Oyster, found itself facing a developing Tropical Revolving Storm during a November crossing.

From shore, Charlie guided the boat safely through the system and completed the passage successfully. What began as helping family quickly became something much bigger.

For the next decade, Charlie continued routing Scarlet Oyster through racing circuits and transatlantic events, including the **Atlantic Rally for Cruisers**. Word spread through dockside conversations and sailing networks, and soon other yachts were requesting the same level of personalised support.

Within a few years, My Weather Router was guiding boats across the Atlantic in both directions, assisting yachts along the US East Coast, and supporting passages throughout the Pacific. As onboard internet improved, offshore skippers were able to receive detailed daily reports at sea — and the service evolved to meet the needs of modern cruisers.

My Weather Router has also worked with well-known sailing YouTube channels such as **Sailing Ocean Fox, Polar Seal,** and **Sailing Atticus,** helping them plan and execute safe and efficient ocean crossings. Their journeys introduced the service to a wider international cruising community, particularly European boats sailing from the Baltic to the Canaries and onward to the Caribbean.

Why Choose My Weather Router?

Modern routing software can generate automated routes. What it cannot do is understand your boat, your crew, or your priorities.

My Weather Router provides a fully personal service, tailored to your yacht and your style of sailing.

Every boat is different. Monohulls and catamarans behave differently in sea states and wind angles. Families with young children often prioritise comfort and conservative sail plans. Short-handed couples may reef at night and avoid complex sail changes. Some crews want performance; others want simplicity and rest.

Each day, you receive:

- A clear 24-hour weather forecast
- Suggested waypoints for the coming days
- A summary of developing systems
- Practical options for managing what lies ahead

The daily report is written as if we have stepped aboard for five minutes to talk directly to you and your crew. Many clients say this daily message provides reassurance, focus, and calm decision-making — particularly when fatigue sets in offshore.

Support Beyond the Forecast

Often, we are routing several yachts at the same time, though in different areas. This creates an added layer of awareness and reassurance. Boats share real-time observations of squalls, sea state, wind shifts, and even Sargasso weed sightings, helping others adjust early.

The result is not just a forecast — but informed decision-making backed by experience and real-world updates.

The greatest difference My Weather Router makes is after you have left port. In harbour, it's easy to discuss weather with fellow sailors. Offshore, the comfort of shared conversation disappears. Internet connections vary, which can reduce the time a skipper spends looking at the weather. Fatigue builds. Decisions feel heavier.

That's when having a professional, experienced router reviewing the bigger picture each day truly matters.

If you are planning a crossing and would like to understand how My Weather Router can support your voyage, please get in touch:

charlie@myweatherrouter.com

WhatsApp: +34 606 359 963

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You can also watch a short YouTube explanation of a 40ft catamaran crossing here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvAZ-TaMSjo&t=2s





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ECO NEWS BRIEFS

Introducing AnuBlue and a Grander Ocean Mission



COURTESY ANUBLUE

Community connection remains central to AnuBlue's mission.

Elkhorn Marine Conservation (EMC) has rebranded as AnuBlue, a name the organization says better reflects its broadened mandate beyond elkhorn coral restoration. "Anu" references Antigua, while "Blue" represents the marine ecosystems the group works to revive. Pronounced "a new blue," the name signals a renewed vision for restoring Antigua and Barbuda's coastal environments.

Founded in 2021 with a single coral nursery near Green Island, the organization has since grown into a multi-site, science-driven program built on three pillars: restoration, research, and community engagement.

AnuBlue now propagates 13 endangered coral species to strengthen reef resilience. Over five years, it has established four nurseries — at Jumby Bay, Cades Reef, and two near Green Island — where fragments from heat and disease-resistant parent colonies are grown before being outplanted onto degraded reefs. By placing genetically diverse corals close together, the team encourages natural spawning and genetic mixing, helping build stronger, climate resilient populations.

Its restoration work is guided by research tailored to local ocean conditions. The organization conducts water quality monitoring, studies the role of sponges and herbivores in reef recovery, and carries out whale acoustic monitoring and shark tagging to inform broader ecosystem management. In the past year, its research was recognized internationally through publication in a peer reviewed journal.

Community connection remains central. AnuBlue employs local fisherfolk and divers to maintain restoration sites and offers ocean based swimming lessons, summer camps, and educational outreach to build ocean confidence and environmental stewardship.

For more information about AnuBlue and its programs, visit www.anublue.org or follow on social media @anublueocean.

Workshop Builds Capacity for Hurricane Damage Assessment



COURTESY TNC

The drop-camera is an important tool in collecting hurricane damage data.

After delays caused by Hurricane Melissa, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) convened its Science Capacity Building Workshop in February 2026 at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, bringing together more than 60 participants from government agencies, NGOs, academia, and local conservation groups. The two-day training focused on using geospatial tools to assess hurricane impacts on coastal and marine ecosystems — a growing priority as extreme weather events intensify across the Caribbean.

—Continued on the next page



—Continued from the previous page

The workshop centered on the practical use of PlanetScope and Sentinel-2 satellite imagery for change detection in mangroves, seagrass beds, and other coastal habitats. Led by TNC Caribbean lead scientist Steve Schill and regional experts, sessions combined foundational instruction with hands-on analysis and real case studies. The goal was to strengthen Jamaica's ability to conduct rapid, accurate environmental assessments following major storms and to improve national reporting on coastal wetland targets under Jamaica's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Organizers emphasized that accessible remote-sensing tools can significantly enhance post-hurricane evaluations, allowing practitioners to identify damage, prioritize field surveys, and support faster, science-based decision-making. Participants practiced interpreting satellite imagery, mapping ecosystem change, and integrating geospatial findings with on-the-ground observations.

For more information, photos and videos, please reach out to Claudia Liévano, Communications Specialist, The Nature Conservancy, Caribbean Division (claudia.lievano@tnc.org).

VI Clean Coasts vs. Single-use Plastics

Single-use plastics and polystyrene remain major sources of pollution across the U.S. Virgin Islands, where they accumulate in landfills, litter streets and coastal areas, and break down into microplastics that persist in the environment and in human bodies. To help reduce these impacts, VI Clean Coasts (VICC) works with schools, businesses, residents, and marinas to replace single-use items with safer, reusable alternatives.

"The biggest challenges for businesses that want to be more sustainable are not knowing where to start or lacking funds to make eco-friendly changes," said Sienna Gray, VICC deputy director. "Our team provides customized guidance and the opportunity to apply for funding to cover start-up costs."

ZENOBIA HOWE



VI Clean Coasts brochures

The VICC Eco-Certification Program is open to any USVI business, with a particular focus on restaurants, food trucks, caterers, and other food-service operations where single-use plastics and Styrofoam are common. After completing a brief interest form, businesses receive hands-on support from VICC coordinators to eliminate Styrofoam, reduce other waste streams, and select reusable or eco-friendly alternatives tailored to their operations.

Eligible businesses may apply for up to $3,500 in seed funding to help purchase reusable dishware, eco-friendly equipment, bottle-filling stations, dishwashers, or other upgrades that reduce waste. Once Styrofoam is eliminated and other pollutants are reduced, businesses can apply for full Eco-Certification.

Certified businesses are featured on VICC's website, newsletters, and social media. VICC has also launched a restaurant-specific webpage with a live interactive map of Eco-Certified food-service businesses across St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix.

Businesses interested in enrolling or applying for funding can visit viconservationsociety.org/eco-certified-restaurants.



Home Port: Sailing from Scrub Island Marina







The trade winds arrive early in the British Virgin Islands. By mid-morning, sails begin to appear across the Sir Francis Drake Channel, gliding between green hills and sunlit anchorages. Boats move easily from island to island, following a route sailors have loved for generations. It is a rhythm shaped by wind, water, and the quiet anticipation of the next harbor on the horizon.

Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina sits along one of the most celebrated stretches of water in the Caribbean. Just east of Tortola, the resort overlooks the Sir Francis Drake Channel, where steady trade winds, clear turquoise seas, and a chain of nearby islands have made the British Virgin Islands the sailing capital of the world. From sunrise departures to golden evening returns, life at Scrub Island moves in rhythm with the water.

At the center of it all is Scrub Island Marina. The full-service marina offers 55 deep water slips available for transient or long-term docking, including five that accommodate larger yachts up to 160 feet in length. Boats glide into the protected harbor framed by green hillsides, and the lively waterfront of Marina Village just steps away. From terraces, restaurants, and villas above the marina, sailboats sway gently in their slips while the Caribbean sun reflects across the water.

What makes the marina especially memorable is how naturally it blends with the life of the resort itself. Step off the dock and Marina Village unfolds around you. Cardamom & Co., Donovan's Reef Marina Bar & Grill, Harbor Boutique, and Scrub Island Outpost sit along the waterfront, placing dining, provisions, and essentials within easy reach of the harbor. The marina is not tucked away from the experience. It is the center of the island's daily flow, where arrivals, departures, and island evenings all come together.

For many sailors, Scrub Island becomes more than a place to dock. It becomes a welcome pause along the journey. After days spent crossing the channel or exploring neighboring islands, crews often trade the close quarters of a boat for the comfort of a night or two ashore. Scrub Island's spacious ocean view suites offer room to spread out, with full kitchens, living areas, private terraces, and in-suite laundry that sailors especially appreciate after time on the water. A leisurely dinner at Cardamom & Co., a quiet walk along the docks watching the lively tarpon illuminated below, and the gentle movement of boats at the marina offer the perfect reset before the next leg of the voyage.

Even for those simply passing through the BVI by boat, Scrub Island often becomes a place that changes the pace of the journey. What begins as a planned overnight stop can easily turn into a few extra days spent enjoying the island between sails. A quiet morning on a terrace overlooking the marina, an afternoon exploring nearby reefs, or a



sunset dinner above the harbor can make the decision to stay just a little longer feel effortless.

After time ashore, mornings on Scrub Island begin slowly. The harbor wakes with the quiet sounds of rigging tapping gently in the breeze and early light stretching across the water. Coffee is enjoyed on private terraces overlooking the marina while boats prepare for the day's sail through the channel.

With extra time on the island, the morning unfolds. A short walk or shuttle ride leads to North Beach, where soft white sand and calm Caribbean waters invite a quiet swim before the heat of the day. Paddleboards drift across the bay while the surrounding islands sit like silhouettes on the horizon.

High above the harbor, Ixora Spa offers another kind of escape. Perched along the hillside with sweeping views across the Sir Francis Drake Channel, the spa feels suspended between sea and sky. After days of sailing, diving, or fishing, the chance to unwind with a massage overlooking the Caribbean becomes a welcome indulgence.

Back in Marina Village, the energy gradually returns as sailors wander down from their suites and crews gather along the docks. Some prepare for departure, checking charts, and topping off supplies. Others linger over breakfast or plan a late morning sail toward Virgin Gorda or Cooper Island. The rhythm of the marina shifts throughout the day, always moving but never rushed.

Many of the island's adventures begin right here at the docks. Dive BVI prepares guests for underwater exploration throughout the surrounding reefs and shipwrecks, while fishing charters depart toward the legendary North Drop, the deep-water fishing grounds known for world record billfish. Located just beyond the island chain, the North Drop is one of the most sought-after fishing destinations in the Caribbean, and Scrub Island Marina is the closest marina to reach it.

Preparing for departure is just as effortless. Through Scrub Island's online provisioning portal, sailors can arrange for gourmet foods, fresh produce, meats and seafood, beer and wine, and spirits to be ready and waiting upon arrival. The marina team ensures vessels can be stocked and refueled quickly, so guests can set out for their next island crossing with ease.

Throughout the year, the harbor also becomes a gathering point for some of the BVI's most exciting moments on the water. Sailors arrive for the BVI Spring Regatta & Sailing Festival, while anglers and crews come together for the Scrub Island Billfish Series, celebrating the thrill of sportfishing in these legendary waters. During these events, the marina takes on a lively energy, with boats lining the docks, crews swapping stories from the day's competition, and the island buzzing with the shared spirit of life at sea.



From Scrub Island Marina, the surrounding islands are easily within reach. Just across the water sits Marina Cay, Scrub Island's sister island, reachable by the resort's private ferry or by boat. With snorkeling, watersports like AquaDart and eFoil, and open-air dining overlooking Tortola and neighboring islands, it offers an effortless stop. Other nearby routes lead to Virgin Gorda, Cooper Island, and Norman Island, placing some of the BVI's most beloved destinations within easy reach.

It is this balance that gives Scrub Island its character. The island remains deeply connected to the energy of the surrounding waters, yet it also offers space to pause, recharge, and enjoy the rare luxury of time between voyages.



Yet no matter where the day's sailing leads, returning to Scrub Island always feels like coming home. As the sun lowers over the Sir Francis Drake Channel, sails appear along the horizon, and boats glide back into the harbor. Lights from Marina Village begin to shimmer across the water as guests gather for dinner, share stories from the day's adventures, and watch the harbor settle into the calm pace of a Caribbean evening.

In the sailing capital of the world, location matters. Scrub Island Resort, Spa & Marina offers both a strategic harbor and a place to truly linger. Whether stopping for a night's reprieve ashore or using the marina as a home base for exploring the BVI, Scrub Island Marina remains one of the most welcoming harbors in the Caribbean.

Learn more at scrubisland.com.

BOOK REVIEW

Coming to Terms in Sailing — And in Life

Return to Blue Water, by Pam Rorke Levy. Nomad Press, Norwich, Vermont. 225 pages. $75

By Tad Richards

A coffee-table book is designed to look beautiful and imposing on a coffee table. You or a visitor can open it to any page, really, and enjoy the big beautiful color photographs of cheetahs or polo players or Mar-a-lago or, in this case, sailboats, in particular a lovingly restored classic 52-foot wooden yawl that stands out in a crowd or by itself on the water.



ALAN CIRINO

Pam Rorke Levy, co-owner and afterguard crew of Dorade, *the famous S&S yawl.*

Return to Blue Water confounds those expectations by containing quite a lot of text, and making it clear that the author expects you to hold the big heavy book on your lap and read it all the way through. The good news is, it's worth the effort.

Pam Rorke Levy gives us not just one absorbing narrative but two. Alternating chapters tell us the history of the dream that became *Dorade*, and the two young men who dreamed it in 1929 and made it a reality in 1930 as the stock market and then the country's economy went crashing around them. Olin Stephens was 21 when he drew up the design for new kind of racing yacht, light, sharp-ended and yawl-rigged, and his teenage younger brother, Rod, oversaw the construction because who else would take on such a harebrained scheme?

The story of two young men with a dream is compelling, but it pales next to the book's main story, of two middle aged people meeting in the wake of foundered dreams. Pam Rorke Levy was a successful documentary filmmaker whose life, and sense of herself, had been shattered by a brutal rape. Matt Brooks was an unmoored eccentric whose already chaotic life had been further upended by a painful divorce. It would have been hard to imagine two more unlikely people getting together — in fact, it was hard for Pam to imagine. But somehow they stuck, and somehow their whirlwind blew them in the direction of buying and restoring what had once been a beautiful boat, although none but the two of them thought that it could be again. "At first I thought we were saving a beautiful old boat," Levy would come to write about the experience. "Looking back on it now, I know that *Dorade* saved us."

Much of the story of a mismatched/perfectly matched couple and their quixotic love affair with a boat thought long past its prime was played out in the Caribbean, and *Dorade*'s reemergence into the racing world limelight after a dormant half-century came at the 2012 Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, the first test of their lovingly restored classic.

Antigua's marina awed Levy at first with "superyachts, motorboats that could pass as ocean liners, and sailboats with masts that rose 200 feet off the deck," alongside a "bizarre mix of vessels. 9-foot rowboats parked alongside 90-foot motor cruisers.

—Continued on page 25



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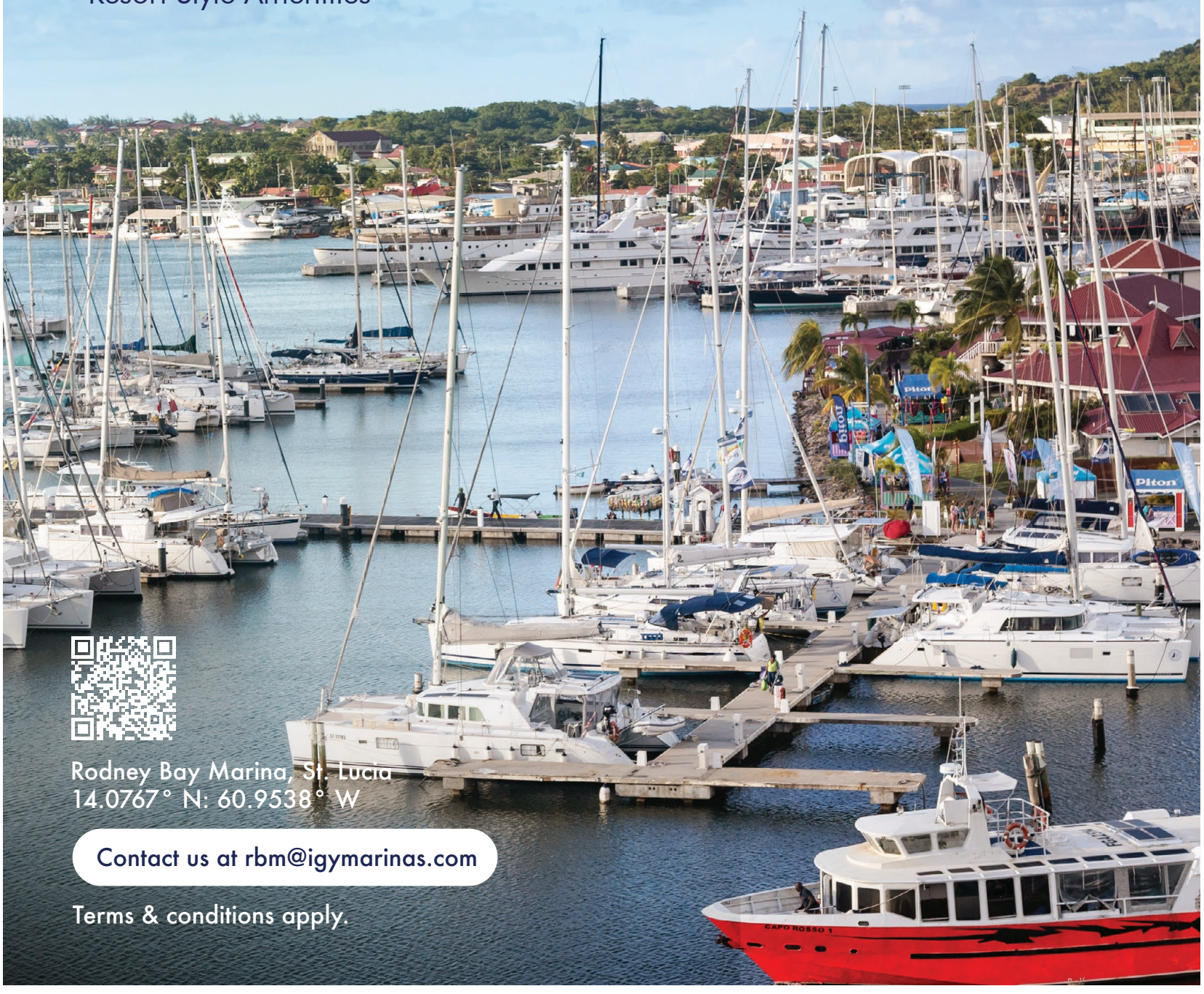
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—*Continued from page 22*

Many were in various stages of disintegration after thousands of miles at sea ... home to self-styled castaways, young and old, who had taken whatever savings they had and headed off to sea ...[they] shared an uncanny family resemblance, sporting the same bleached hair and beards, salt-blistered skin, and hands rough as sandpaper."



BERNARD RUBINSTEIN

Pam fits the Dorade *vent onto its ventilation box. The fitting, widely used in sailboat construction due to its ability to funnel fresh air below while allowing water to drain out on deck, was the creation of Rod Stephens, who oversaw the build of* Dorade.

At the yacht club itself, they were confronted with their competition: "finely tuned vessels, driven and maintained by professional crews who spent much of the day lounging in the shoreside snack bar chatting up local waitresses, while local boatwrights ... stripped down the teak and mahogany brightwork and laid down coat after coat of varnish." Levy's first impression of the boats themselves: "Bigger than *Dorade*, schooners with soaring masts and hulls twice the length of ours ... we were dwarfed by what seemed like oceangoing behemoths, some dating back to the late 1800s ... [They] seemed to be playing in a different league from our little boat, with its tarnished bronze work and spartan furnishings." But *Dorade* came in first in its class on the first day of racing.

The second day was a different story, with the roughest seas Levy and Brooks had encountered, which the bigger boats could handle, while the new sailors felt as though they'd mounted a roller coaster with waves crashing over them. They realized they were out of the competition, and went to their first awards ceremony more than a little dejected. Then came the final award of the night. Levy listened as the announcer said,

> "I'll never forget the first time I saw her. I was just a boy, but I thought she was the most beautiful boat I'd ever seen." His face softened at the memory ... It gives me great pleasure to announce the winner of this year's Concours d'Élégance ... what many of us consider the first modern racing yacht ... she's as lovely as she is invincible ... *Dorade*."

Dorade didn't win that day, but her blue water miracle was soon enough to come. If the waters around Antigua had been rough, how could the little boat be expected to handle the Pacific Ocean? But the by-then hardened crew took her to the July 2013 Transpacific Race from Long Beach, California to Hawaii, and brought her in for a corrected-time first place finish.

Dorade's peak performance under the Stephens brothers had been the 1931 Transatlantic race from Newport to England. Levy and Brooks entered the same race in 2015, with the announced goal of beating not only the current competition but the ghosts of the Stephens — although the course would be 150 miles longer than the route the Stephens took in 1931. Through rough seas that proved too much for many of the boats that started, *Dorade* finished a close second ... but a full day ahead of the Stephens.

Matt and Pam married in January 2019. In December of that year she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Their life with *Dorade* had taught her to overcome fears that had paralyzed her for much of her life, and they determined to defy those fears for as long as she had left.

Pam Rorke Levy died on January 4, 2024. She left behind a completed manuscript. With the firm editorial guidance of Elaine Lembo and the determination of Matt Brooks, the book came to fruition and was published in 2025 by Nomad Press. *Dorade*'s story is a miracle on blue water, and Levy's book is a witness to history. Not to mention an improbable and engrossing love story.



Buy the book from bluewaterweb.com/product/return-to-blue-water.




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CALENDAR

April 2026

1-4	Vujaday Music Festival, Barbados. vujadaymusicfestival.com
2	Pink Moon (full moon)
2-4	International Blueseas Festival, Pietermaai District, Curaçao. curaçaoblueseasfestival.com
2-5	St. Thomas International Regatta, St. Thomas, USVI. stthomasinternationalregatta.com.
2-5	Fiesta del Tambor, Havana, Cuba. carnifest.com/drum-festival-fiesta-del-tambor-2026/
3-6	Bequia Easter Regatta. svgsailingweek.com/2026
3-6	Puerto Rico Wine and Food Festival, San Juan. discoverpuertorico.com/event/puerto-rico-wine-food-festival/1327
3	Good Friday
3-6	Oistin's Fish Festival, Christ Church, Barbados. oistinsfishfestival.com
3-14	Afro-Cuban Dance Festival, Havana. afrocubandancefestival.com
4	Caribbean Beach Food Festival, Trinidad. caribbeanbeachfood.com
4-6	Crab Festival, Sainte-Marie, Martinique. azmartinique.com/en/events/crab-fair
5	Easter Sunday
5-6	Easterval on Union Island, SVG. caribbeanevents.com/event/easterval-on-union-island
6-12	Ritmo Cuba, International Cuban Dance Festival, Hotel Nacional de Cuba in Vedado, Havana. ritmocuba.com
7	Buccoo Goat Race Festival, Tobago. visittobago.gov.tt/festivals-events
8-14	Jamaica Carnival, Kingston, Montego Bay & Negril (Grand Parade April 12). socaislands.com
9-12	Antigua Racing Cup. antiguaracingcup.com
9-12	Virgin Islands Literary Festival. bvilitfest.com
10	Environmental Fridays: Asthma and Allergy Network
10-4	May Sint Maarten Carnival. sxm-carnival.com
11	Bus Dinghy Regatta, St. Maarten. smyc.com
15-20	Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta. antiguaclassics.com
16	Public holiday in Puerto Rico (Birthday of José de Diego).
17	Environmental Fridays: Greening the Church
18-19	Coffee & Chocolate Expo, Puerto Rico Convention Center, San Juan coffeeandchocolateexpo.com
18-21	Carriacou Maroon & String Band Music Festival. ourcarriacou.com/maroon-string-band-music-festival
22	Earth Day
22-26	Antigua Sailing Week. sailingweek.com
24	Environmental Fridays: Seas and Scenes – Love the Caribbean. Guest host Tabitha Stadler, EPIC
24-26	Barbados Reggae Festival, Bridgetown. barbadosreggaeweekend.com
24-26	Tobago Jazz Experience. tobagofestivalscommission.com
25	Governor's Cup, Royal BVI Yacht Club, Tortola. royalbviyc.org
25	Capella Music Festival, Grand Cayman. capellamusicfestival.com
26	Peters and May Round Antigua Race
26-3 May	St. Thomas Carnival. visitusvi.com/carnivals-festivals/
27	Public holiday in St. Maarten and Bonaire (King's Day).
28	Public holiday in Barbados (National Heroes' Day).
28	Antigua-Bermuda Race. antiguabermuda.com
29-3 May	Vallenato Festival, Valledupar, Colombia. colombia.travel/en/fairs-and-festivals/festival-vallenato
30	Public holiday in Bonaire (Rincon Day).
30	Public holiday in St. Maarten – Queen Julianna's Birthday/ Carnival Day
30	Soka Elements J'Ouvert Block Party, St. Thomas, USVI. sokaelements.com
30-3 May	NGC Bocas Lit Fest, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. bocaslitfest.com
30-3 May	Beachfront Jazz Segment,Tobago. tobagofestivalscommission.com
30-10 May	St. Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival. stlucia.org/en/jazz/



TAD RICHARDS

Crab Festival, Sainte-Marie, Martinique

See the entire calendar of events at caribbeancompass.com/caribbean-events-calendar



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Charles S. Tobias

April 23, 1934 – October 14, 2025

Founder of Pusser's Rum Ltd.

Story and photos by Gary L. Rogalski, James L. Jackson and the Pusser's Rum team

You may know the spirit and recognize the name, but the story of the man behind Pusser's Rum is a nautical epic. Though the Pusser's Rum brand was born in 1979, Charles Tobias's journey began in 1934.


Charles Tobias

The U.S. Marine Corps

Born in Canada, Charles earned an athletic scholarship to the University of Southern California after running the fastest mile in Canadian schoolboy history — 4:06. His main competitor at the time was Roger Bannister, the British runner who famously broke the four-minute barrier.

Charles graduated with dual degrees in aeronautical and mechanical engineering, then enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. During boot camp at Parris Island, he was selected for fighter pilot training and sent to Pensacola, Florida. He served two tours in Vietnam — first aboard an aircraft carrier, then in special operations flying T-28s ashore. During his second tour, he was shot down over the Mekong Delta and rescued by Navy SEALs. That experience, and his time in uniform, instilled the courage, discipline, and honor that defined his life and his ventures.

Technology Savant

After his service, Charles returned to California and founded Veradyne, Inc. in Santa Monica, aiming to counter surface-to-air missile threats. He secured a government contract to develop silicon transistors and radar-jamming technology, building Veradyne into a $100 million enterprise before merging with Fairchild Semiconductor.

From modest beginnings, Charles rose to a life of comfort and success — living in a 37-room mansion once owned by actor Joseph Cotten, driving four Ferraris and two Rolls-Royces, and sailing aboard a sizable yacht. His circle of friends included the Smothers Brothers and former Marine Steve McQueen, who resided with Charles for a short period of time.

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Setting Sail

Charles's love for sailing took root after his time at sea in the Marines. Though his family never owned a boat, he purchased a small one and quickly fell in love with the water. He began racing, upgrading vessels, and eventually set his sights on circumnavigating. One day, stuck in traffic on his way to the bank, he called his assistant, canceled his meetings, and made the decision to set sail.



Charles with Fifi and Tommy

He embarked on a five-year voyage aboard *Mar*, a 57-foot wooden ketch built for icy waters — with 2¾-inch larch planking and 12 tons of lead in the keel — purchased from his friend Ernest Gann, aviator and author of *The High and the Mighty* and *Song of the Sirens*. His crew included three sailors and two unforgettable companions: a chimpanzee named Tommy and a cheetah named Fifi.

After the journey, Charles persuaded Paramount Studios to fund *The Way of the Wind* — a film he wrote, narrated, directed, and produced. If you're fortunate enough to find a copy, you'll glimpse the character, brilliance, and courage of an extraordinary man.

First Taste of British Navy Rum

While docked in Gibraltar searching for a boat part, Charles boarded a British Navy warship. The captain gifted him a flagon of dark navy rum for the next leg of his journey. Though the daily tot had been discontinued, ships still carried rum for the ceremonial occasions known as "Splice the Mainbrace."



Charles and Admiral Sir Gordon Tait, Second Sea Lord

Over the next 15 days at sea, Charles and his crew finished the flagon — and a new idea was born.



Charles and Queen Elizabeth II

The Birth of Pusser's Rum

Determined to revive the legendary naval spirit, Charles approached the British Royal Navy for permission to use their rum blend and the White Ensign. With support from General Arthur B. Hanson, he secured a meeting with Second Sea Lord Admiral Sir Gordon Tait. After navigating the necessary channels, he was granted access to the original Admiralty blend — though the name "Royal Navy Pusser's Rum" was declined and replaced with "British Navy Pusser's Rum."

As a gesture of gratitude, Charles pledged ongoing support to the Royal Navy Sailor's Fund, known as the "Tot" Fund. Over the years, the brand honored that promise, contributing more than €250,000 to the fund, which was later consolidated into the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charities (RNRMC). In recognition of his charitable efforts, Charles was awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in the Queen's 2011 New Year Honours list.

Charles partnered with Trinidad Distillers Ltd., working with master blender Robert Wong to source and blend the distillates to Admiralty specifications. He founded Pusser's Ltd. on Tortola in the British Virgin Islands, where the rum was blended and bottled — making the purser's rum commercially available for the first time in history.

The Pusser's Brand

Charles expanded the brand with Pusser's restaurants and company stores around the world, some of which still operate today. In 1990, he sold the rum brand to Jim Beam but continued bottling until a fire destroyed the plant, which was never rebuilt.

In 2002, with Charles's encouragement, Jim Jackson repurchased the brand from Beam. Today, it remains in the care of Jim's son, Jamie Jackson.

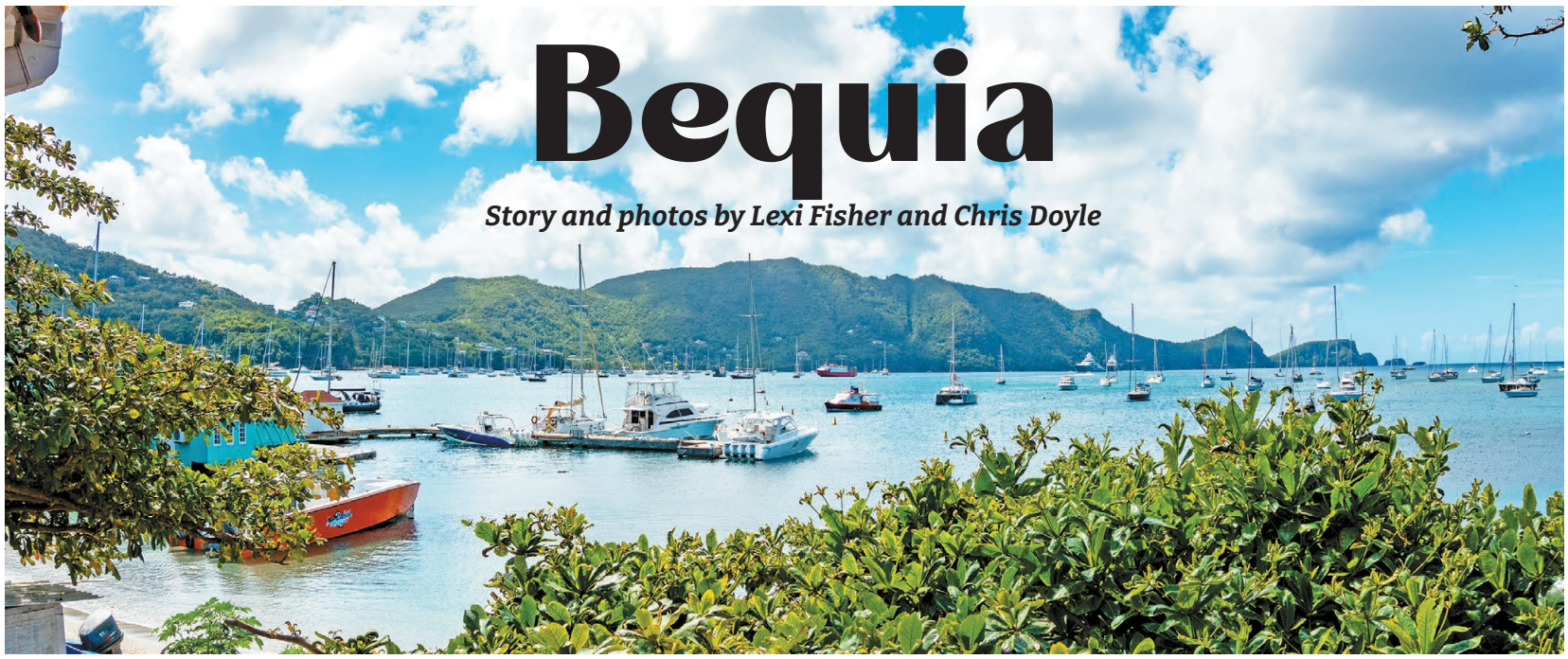


Charles with Gary Rogalski

Crossing the Bar

In 2021, Charles and Joanna, his beloved wife of 37 years, settled in Vero Beach, Florida. Their home became a living archive of Pusser's memorabilia and nautical history. Every chapter of his life — documented, photographed, and even filmed — speaks to a legacy built with purpose and adventure.

Charles Tobias lived the lives of many men, each story etched with meaning. And now, with a heavy heart, we mark the close of his voyage — grateful for the wake he leaves behind.



Bequia

Story and photos by Lexi Fisher and Chris Doyle

Bequia's Belmont Walkway on the waterfront is iconic among sailors. It skirts the perimeter of Admiralty Bay, connecting boutiques, restaurants, dive shops, dinghy docks, and beaches, making some of Bequia's most cherished destinations easily accessible to those on yachts.

The vibrant social scene, calm anchorages, and idyllic white sand beaches have made Bequia a favorite among yachtspeople. Isolated enough to remain relatively unspoiled, yet lively enough to be stimulating and entertaining, it provides a blend of the old and new that many find perfect. It is well connected with St. Vincent and the other Grenadines, both by a small airport and by the cheaper and more traditional ferries. Some yachtspeople leave their boats anchored in Bequia and take a ferry to visit St. Vincent.

Bequia is an island of sailors and boats, linked to the outside world mainly by the sea, and the old traditions continue. Boats are built on the beach in the shade of palm trees, though these days the building methods are a lot more high-tech, and the traditional fishing boats have morphed into sports boats capable of speeds well over 10 knots. Bequians travel all over the world on cargo vessels. Quite a few have ended up owning their own, and some are intrepid fishermen who venture all over the Grenadines in little open boats. They are a proud people, descendants of settlers who came from North America, on whaling boats from farms in Scotland, from France as freebooters, and as enslaved people from Africa.



The Whaleboner on the Belmont waterfront in Port Elizabeth



Friendship Bay

The island has an active whaling station in a low-key and traditional way. By International Whaling Commission agreement, local whalers can take four whales a year, but in some years they do not get any. The whaling season is from February to April. At this time of year humpback whales leave their northern feeding grounds and head south to mate and bear young. Few people are left in Bequia with the skills necessary to hunt them — a daring feat in an open sailing boat, using hand-thrown harpoons. On the rare occasions that they make a kill, the hunters tow the whale to Semplers Cay for butchering.

Friendship Bay is a harbor on the south coast, and there is a daytime anchorage at Petit Nevis, but Bequia's main harbor is Admiralty Bay. It is a huge, well-protected bay with Bequia's only town, Port Elizabeth, at its head. Small hotels, bars, restaurants, and shops spread from town along both shores, strung together in the south by the Walkway. This delightful coastal path, renovated and extended by Action Bequia, meanders along the shore, skirting a few trees, to Plantation House. Here it climbs the hill before bringing you back to the sea via a lovely wooden staircase. It then turns into a path that takes you to Princess Margaret Beach.

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Belmont Walkway meanders along the shore to Plantation House.

Much of Bequia's tourist industry is based on visiting yachts, so you will find good yacht services, restaurants, shops, and handicrafts, many made only here. Bequians understand yachting: several yacht services are grouped together in Ocar on the northern shore. Others are in Port Elizabeth. Good dinghy docks are spaced around the bay, including one at Dockside Marine, a large and well-stocked chandlery. There are multiple canvas and sailmakers on the island, and Bequia has the friendliest and broadest range of on-water service providers, from which you can get everything from your water and diesel tanks filled to fresh bakery items every morning, laundry services, and garbage collection.



Downtown Port Elizabeth



Model boats at the Bequia Maritime Museum, Front Street, Port Elizabeth

You will also have a great range of restaurants and entertainment, from relaxed beach bars to the more formal atmosphere of the larger resorts. Wander down the coast for a beach day and dine with your toes in the sand, overlooking the clear turquoise waters of Lower Bay. Afterward, dinghy over to Bar One, the Windward's only floating bar, for a cocktail to go with the explosion of color that so often accompanies the Caribbean sunset. Paired with the friendly locals and accessible yacht services, it's no wonder Bequia is such a popular yachting destination.

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)

KELLY MERTON



Spring Bay Beach, on the eastern side of Bequia facing the Atlantic Ocean, offers swaying palms and a respite from the bustle of the waterfront.

St Vincent & the Grenadines (SVG) Entry and Exit Procedures

Ports of Entry

The port of entry for Bequia is Port Elizabeth. Details on the other SVG ports of entry can be found on Noonsite via the blue "Explore Country" button. www.noonsite.com/place/st-vincent-the-grenadines

Advance Paperwork

All visiting yachts should pre-register with SailClear prior to arrival.

For visitors from many countries, a visa is not required. Stays of up to 6 months can be granted.

Entry Process

On arrival, the captain should proceed to the customs, immigration and port authority offices with the SailClear notification ID number, exit zarpe, crew passports and boat paperwork. A 30-day cruising permit is granted at check-in, with additional months possible upon request.

Exit Process

Same as the entry process; clear out at one of the ports of entry.

Rates

Private vessels must pay a monthly cruise tax of $35 XCD per person on all crew and passengers over the age of 12. Charter boats must be in possession of an SVG cruising license.

noonsite.com

Check SVG Clearance on Noonsite (www.noonsite.com/place/st-vincent-the-grenadines/view/clearance/) for more detailed information and updates [free log-in required]. This information is provided by Noonsite.com, specialists in worldwide formalities for yachts, and was accurate at press time.

Viking Explorers Rally 2026 Concludes in Grenada

The ninth Viking Explorers Rally wrapped up in Grenada after a challenging Atlantic crossing marked by weather delays.



COURTESY VIKING EXPLORERS

Welcome of the boats at the dock in Grenada

This year's 25-boat rally was shaped by atypical Atlantic weather systems that forced two unprecedented departure delays — first in the Canary Islands and again in Cape Verde. Organizers postponed the official welcome ceremony in Grenada by five days, underscoring the rally's safety-first philosophy. A hallmark of the event is its consensus based departure protocol, in which organizers and skippers jointly confirm each start window only after reviewing real time forecasts.

After regrouping in Cape Verde, the fleet began the transatlantic leg, navigating shifting trade winds and variable conditions. The first arrival in Grenada was *SY Agape*, a Dolphin 460 catamaran captained by John Blakeman with crew Deb and Dana, completing the passage in 12 days. Crews were welcomed at Port Louis Marina by local officials, marina staff, and rally organizers.

2026 award highlights included:

- Newest Yacht: SY *Sea Dreamer* (Lagoon 46)
- Oldest Yacht: SY *Calainë* (Nauticat, 1983)
- Biggest Sailboat: SY *Alora* (Hylas 56)
- Smallest Yacht: SY *Joyce Ellen* (Moody S336)
- Youngest Captain: Chris Lawrence, SY *Yanula Blue*
- Oldest Captain: Stephen, SY *Alora*
- Spirit of the Viking Explorers: Chris Lawrence, SY *Yanula Blue*

Organizers are preparing for the rally's tenth anniversary in 2027. pplications exceeded 60 boats; the first 25 invitations have been issued, maintaining the event size limit.

Vincentian Sailor Joshua Weinhardt Claims Bronze in Martinique

Vincentian dinghy sailor Joshua Weinhardt continued his rise on the regional circuit with a bronze-medal finish in the ILCA 4 class at the 34th Semaine Nautique Internationale de Schoelcher, held mid-February in Martinique and considered one of the Caribbean's most competitive youth sailing events. Organized by the Cercle Nautique de Schoelcher and sailed under World Sailing and Fédération Française de Voile rules, the event features four days of racing across Optimist, ILCA, and board classes in the challenging waters of Fort-de-France Bay.



COURTESY SVGSA

Joshua Weinhardt takes his place on the podium.

Weinhardt delivered a steady, disciplined performance across the ILCA 4 series, including multiple race wins, to secure third overall in a fleet known for tight competition and shifting breezes.

The Martinique result adds to an impressive run for the young sailor. Over the year, Weinhardt has earned several major podium finishes, including silver at the 2025 Caribbean Dinghy Championships and gold at the 2026 Barbados Sailing Week Junior Regatta. He is a member of the Vincy Sailing Club and part of the SVG Sailing Association's high-performance youth pathway.

Those interested in learning to sail can contact svgsailingassociation@gmail.com for more information.

World Sailing Race Management Course Held

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Sailing Association (SVGSA) hosted a World Sailing Race Management Course, Level 1, in February at the SVG Sailing Association Centre of Excellence at Coconut Grove Beach Club. Fifteen participants from junior sailing clubs across Union Island, Bequia, Mayreau, and St. Vincent took part, building race-management capacity across the islands and strengthening the long-term development of sailing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The course was delivered by international instructors Becky Ashburn and Jeff Johnson of the San Diego Yacht Club, both Olympic-level race officials. Participants received a blend of classroom instruction and hands-on training aligned with World Sailing standards, focusing on the core skills needed to manage club-level events with confidence.

Sailability Regatta Fundraiser Held at National Sailing Academy

Antigua's National Sailing Academy hosted its first Sailability Regatta Fundraiser, supported by the Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC). Five teams raced in RS Venture Connects, adaptive sailing boats designed for sailors with physical disabilities. After five races, Team 42 finished first, followed by the RORC Team and Team Blueprint.

The event was created by sailor Luke Spink, who also competed in the RORC Caribbean 600 and is an advocate for accessible sailing. All proceeds support the Academy's Sailability Programme, which provides on-water opportunities for people with disabilities. Falmouth Ocean Club provided safety support for the regatta.

Donate to the Sailability Programme at nationalsailingacademy.org/payments/.



Antigua Racing Cup: Serious Sailing in the Caribbean's Sailing Capital



Few places on earth are as synonymous with sailing as **Antigua and Barbuda**. With steady trade winds, deep maritime heritage, and a race calendar that attracts sailors from around the globe, the twin-island nation has long been regarded as **the home of Caribbean sailing and one of the world's most respected racing venues.**

This April **during Antigua and Barbuda Regatta Month**, a new regatta steps confidently into that tradition—one designed with a clear purpose and built for sailors who love great racing

Welcome to the Antigua Racing Cup (ARC).

Running **Wednesday, April 8 to Sunday, April 12**, ARC is hosted entirely within the **UNESCO World Heritage site of Nelson's Dockyard**, the only working Georgian naval dockyard in the world and arguably one of the most atmospheric regatta venues anywhere in the world. Registration and the opening party kick things off on Wednesday, followed by **four days of racing and daily prize givings** through Sunday.

ARC may be the newest regatta on the Caribbean circuit, but its foundations run deep in Antigua's sailing story. The event emerges as the natural evolution of **Antigua Sailing Week**, drawing on decades of experience while creating something purpose-built for modern racing fleets.

A Fresh Approach to Caribbean Racing

Since its beginnings in 1968, Antigua Sailing Week grew into one of the Caribbean's most famous regattas. Over the years it welcomed everyone—from cruising boats and club racers to maxis and professional race teams. But serving such a wide range of sailors inevitably meant compromise.

The Antigua Racing Cup takes a different approach.

Rather than stretching one event to suit every type of boat, ARC focuses squarely on **high-performance race yachts, modern performance cruisers, and one-design fleets.** By separating the events, both regattas can now focus on the sailors they are designed for.

ARC is intentionally technical and competitive—built for sailors who want challenging courses and meaningful racing.

Courses Designed for the Boats

The philosophy behind ARC is simple: design the racing around the boats actually competing.

Fast boats thrive on powerful reaching legs and sustained speed. One-design fleets demand tight windward-leeward courses where tactics and boat handling decide the winner. Performance cruisers want racing that's exciting without being overwhelming.

By working directly with competitors, the race committee can shape courses that deliver exactly that. **Virtual marks** give race officers the flexibility to adapt courses to wind conditions and fleet needs.

Supporting the action on the water is a respected International Jury, led by U.S. judge Tom Rinda, helping ensure fair competition and trusted decisions.

Respecting Caribbean Traditions

The **CSA Rating Rule**, the backbone of Caribbean racing for decades, remains central to ARC. At the same time, many international teams arrive with **IRC certificates** from major offshore events.

ARC embraces both systems. CSA determines fleet divisions on the water, while IRC scoring offers an additional competitive layer—helping connect Caribbean racing with the wider international circuit.

A Growing International Fleet



Interest in the inaugural event is already strong. As of late January 2026, **19 boats had entered,** representing the **UK, USA, Canada, Barbados, and Antigua**.

The fleet ranges from the pocket-rocket **Melges 24 *Whiplash*** to professional programs like **Rikki** and race-charter yachts such as **Spirit of Juno**. Performance multihulls and one-design fleets—including **RS Elites and Diam 24s**—are also welcome, with organizers expecting **30 to 40 boats** on the starting line.

For sailors without their own yacht in the Caribbean, race-ready charter options make participation straightforward—arrive in Antigua and be on the water within hours.

Youth to Keel: Building the Future

ARC continues one of Antigua Sailing Week's most successful initiatives: the **Youth to Keel programme.**

Young sailors from the **National Sailing Academy** and **Antigua Yacht Club** can join visiting teams for real racing experience, building skills and connections with international crews.

Racing in One of the World's Best Arenas

The waters off Antigua's south coast offer everything racers dream about: steady trade winds, open Atlantic swell, and dramatic island backdrops.

Courses stretch between English Harbour and Falmouth Harbour, providing dynamic conditions that reward both skill and teamwork.

Shoreside Energy

Every afternoon, the day's sailing energy and history meet as the **regatta village comes alive inside the historic Nelson's Dockyard National Park**, framed by the centuries-old **Copper & Lumber Store Hotel** and the **Officers' Quarters.**

Prize givings on the lawn bring crews together to relive the day's racing over cold drinks, local food, and Caribbean music. Just outside the Dockyard, the **Wadadli Grill** keeps the social side going well into the evening.

A New Chapter

The Antigua Racing Cup represents more than another regatta on the calendar. It reflects a willingness to evolve—drawing on nearly six decades of Caribbean racing heritage while adapting to modern competitive sailing.

For a destination already known as the **home of Caribbean sailing**, ARC feels like a natural next step.

Serious racing. Legendary waters. And one of the most iconic harbours in the sailing world.

For more info, entries, results, photos, and updates, visit ***www.antiguaracingcup.com*** and follow along on social with #AntiguaRacingCup and #SeriousSailing

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Your Complete Marine Centre in the heart of Spanish Town: The Evolution of Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbour



There is a distinct energy returning to the docks at Virgin Gorda Yacht Harbour (VGYH). For decades, it has been the gateway to the North Sound and the Baths, but lately, it has become much more than a transit point. It's a destination in its own right. After a landmark year of growth, the harbour is blending its rich maritime history with a modern, full-service lifestyle that serves both the international sailing community and the local heart of Virgin Gorda.

A Landmark 2025: More Than Just a Marina

The past year saw VGYH solidify its status as a premier Caribbean hub. The physical upgrades, including enhanced docks equipped with power and water systems, were just the beginning. The real story lies in the Marina Mall, which has evolved into a vibrant centre.

The tenant list is now a curated mix of essential services and high-end leisure. You can handle your errands at the bank (Banco Popular), pharmacy (Medicure), or medical clinic (Eureka Medical), then pivot immediately to vacation mode. We've welcomed &Beyond Yacht Charters, marking the first time since the 1990s that a major charter company has chosen VGYH as its home base. For shoppers, Artistry Boutique offers a genuine piece of the islands with its locally made souvenirs, while the opening of the Lotus Center Spa adds a dedicated space for wellness and relaxation right on the waterfront. To top it off, Botella, a new rooftop bar at VGYH, provides the perfect vantage point for a sundowner after a day on the water. This "all-in-one" ecosystem is rounded out by the convenience of on-site insurance offices (Caribbean Insurers Ltd.), telecommunications providers (CCT), and specialised dental services, ensuring every logistical need is met just steps from the dock.

A major highlight of 2025 was our collaboration with the Charter Yacht Society (CYS). In November, we hosted a portion of the CYS charter show fleet, shuttling guests over from Nanny Cay to experience our facilities firsthand. It was a proud moment for the team and a successful showcase. We look forward to making it an annual tradition.

World-Class Boatyard & Marina Services

At the core of our operations is a commitment to the vessels that call VGYH home. Our full-service boatyard stands as one of the most reliable technical hubs in the BVI. Equipped with a high-capacity travelift, we provide professional haul-out services, secure long-term storage, and expert maintenance ranging from bottom painting to mechanical repairs.

On the water, the marina experience has been completely revitalised. This isn't just a place to tie up; it's a high-spec home base. Our slips have been recently updated with power and water, ultra-fast Wi-Fi for crews on the move, and 24/7 security that offers total peace of mind. Whether you are a solo voyager prepping for a crossing or a fleet manager seeking a world-class berth, our facility provides the reliable infrastructure and support necessary for any Caribbean adventure.

Looking Ahead to 2026

As we move into 2026, the momentum isn't slowing down. We are thrilled to announce that Josh Ridgway has joined the team to spearhead the return of our highly anticipated gourmet store. Having a dedicated high-end provisioning outlet back on the grounds will be a game-changer for crews and residents alike.

We are also looking at the "missing piece" of the Virgin Gorda experience: accommodation. We are currently developing a selection of hotel rooms on-site. The goal is to fill the niche for high-quality, accessible lodging right in the heart of the action, perfect for those who want to stay close to the docks without the logistics of a sprawling resort.

Throughout all these changes, the harbour remains, at its heart, a place for the people of Virgin Gorda to gather. We plan to continue hosting the events that bring the island together, from the vibrant energy of the Easter Festival to the high-stakes excitement of our local fishing tournaments. VGYH isn't just a place to tie up a boat; it's a living part of the Spanish Town community.

The Virgin Gorda Gateway: A Seamless Island Connection

What truly sets VGYH apart in 2026 is its role as the ultimate "all-in-one" Caribbean stop. In an era where travel can feel fragmented, we've built an ecosystem where convenience meets luxury. Within a few hundred meters, a captain can clear customs, a guest can visit a top-tier dentist or insurance office, and enjoy a diverse shopping experience.

By integrating essential island infrastructure, like our phone companies and medical services, with a luxury marina atmosphere, we've created a "shore-side living" experience that respects the slow-paced charm of Virgin Gorda while delivering the efficiency that modern travelers expect. We aren't just a harbour; we are the front door to the island.

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Published by Compass Publishing LLC, Connecticut, USA, and printed by Guardian Media Limited, Trinidad & Tobago