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ST. CROIX REALTY

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ST. CROIX REAL ESTATE NEWS

APRIL 2020



Photo by Tatiana from Pixels

The past month has given us the opportunity to appreciate more of what we love about St. Croix. The little things, like neighbors looking after each other and businesses run by friends and neighbors make us feel so connected to our community. Our business owners have adapted to life right now and businesses of all types are now offering online ordering and curbside pickup. Several of our restaurants have added family-size meals to their menus to accommodate a house full of people spending more time at home.

There's an easy way to support St. Croix businesses now, while you wait to return. Build your own virtual adventure and purchase gift certificates for yourself or a friend to use once those businesses reopen.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- A morning of scuba followed by lunch on the water
- A spa day, then some time at the beach
- A guided kayak tour to wrap up a day of exploring
- Horseback riding on the beach at sunset
- A round of golf, followed by a trip to the brewery
- A fishing charter with friends
- Meeting for coffee, then afternoon shopping
- A group dinner with your favorite people
- Purchasing just-picked vegetables from a farm stand after a visit to the museum

You get the idea! Plan your perfect day now and it will be ready and waiting for you later. You'll have twice as much fun, first planning, and then doing! St. Croix will be here to greet you. Check our blog for links to activities and businesses.

This newsletter written by Jennifer Burns
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Message from Bry...



Bry Locher

I hope you and your family are staying safe and healthy at this unprecedented time. Like everywhere else, on St. Croix businesses of all types have been impacted by Coronavirus. Work and school are now taking place remotely, from the comfort of home. We are fortunate that it's easy for many of us to practice social distancing... going out for a hike, reading a book on our gallery, opening the windows to feel the fresh breeze, or simply staring out at the Caribbean Sea allows us to stay comfortable but not too confined.

We are confident that when life returns to normal, St. Croix's lack of crowds and stunning views will continue to lure visitors back to our piece of paradise. Until then, we invite you to visit with us online. Our web site has hundreds of listings for homes, condos and land on which you can build the home of your dreams. Our agents are happy to give you a virtual tour or consult with you over the phone or by email.

If you'd like to see how we're passing the time, follow Coldwell Banker St. Croix Realty or our agents on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. In addition, there are more than a dozen web cams across the island where you can watch daily life on St. Croix. Why not take a cyber-getaway? You'll be glad you did.



Bry

Bry Locher, Managing Broker
Coldwell Banker St. Croix Realty

EACH OFFICE IS INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED

ST. CROIX'S SUGAR MILLS

The Christiansted Community Alliance recently hosted an enlightening and inspirational lecture about some of our island's most recognizable landmarks: sugar mills. Danish Architect Amal Ashur presented "A Postcolonial Path – Sugar Mills from Taboo to Attraction" at the Florence A. Williams Public Library in Christiansted.

Ashur originally visited St. Croix as a student in 2016, ahead of the Centennial Transfer anniversary. She and her fellow students from the Aarhus School of Architecture of Denmark spent three weeks in St. Croix as part of the "In Search of Identity" project, a collaboration between the Virgin Islands and Denmark.

While Ashur conducted her work in Christiansted she learned about a history that was not taught in Danish schools while she was growing up. As she learned more about St. Croix she realized our island has a silent history in Denmark. What Ashur learned here inspired her to write her master's thesis to honor the people who built Christiansted and Frederiksted. "Sugar mills are landmarks," she said. "But you can't ignore their history."

Despite the fact that sugar mills on St. Croix are the most visible element left over from the Danish colonial era, Ashur considers them to be an overlooked part of our architectural heritage, one that unites Denmark and the Virgin Islands. Understanding how the sugar mills have remained stable structures over the years aids in our ability to construct climate resilient architecture.

Ashur conducted extensive research on the mills at Estate Northside, Estate Mount Washington, Estate Whim, Estate Castle Coakley, Estate Cane Garden, Comanche Mill, and Estate Diamond Katurah. She assessed each mill's value from several points of view. Estate Mount Washington received the highest marks for environmental value, cultural and historic value, and architectural value, while Comanche Mill and Castle Coakley are believed to have the highest future potential value to visitors and locals.

She explained that her project was a way to pay tribute to the enslaved people who built the sugar mills. "I want to help the people of Denmark understand the history of the Virgin Islands. I want people to get a different understanding of the sugar mills than just the postcard view." Ashur hopes to see the mills preserved in order to conserve our history. "Without the mills we'd forget about them and only see pictures of mills in a museum."



Photo by Joe Hardenbrook for Flickr

NEW SALT RIVER BAY QUARTER

The beauty, archeology and historic heritage contained within Salt River Bay is being celebrated by the United States Mint, in the form of a new quarter dollar coin. As part of the Mint's America the Beautiful Quarters Program, Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve is being honored as one of 56 national parks and other national sites – one in each state, U.S. territory, and the District of Columbia.

The America the Beautiful Quarters Program features five new designs for the reverse (tails side) of the quarter dollar coin each year. The obverse (heads side) remains unchanged with the image of George Washington. The program began in 2010 and issued new quarters in the order in which the featured site was first established as a national park or site.

The program chose to recognize Salt River Bay for its natural and historic significance. The design depicts a red mangrove tree in an early stage of its life cycle, as it evolves from a very small plant to an adult tree. The design brings awareness to the park's endangered mangrove forests and the unique and delicate nature of how the species reproduces in salt water.

The America the Beautiful Quarters Program follows the 2009 District of Columbia and U.S. Territories Quarters Program. In that release, the U.S. Virgin Islands quarter featured an outline of the three major islands; the Yellow Breast or Bananaquit, our official bird; the Yellow Cedar or Yellow Elder, our official flower; a Tyre Palm Tree; and the phrase, "United in Pride and Hope," our official motto.

The new coins are scheduled to be released into circulation on June 1, 2020.





ST. CROIX HOME INSPECTION TIPS

by Dan Savaro

As a seller of real estate in the Virgin Islands, one of the most important steps to take is to prepare your house for a home inspection. Whether you are driven by obtaining top dollar or focused on preventing any unexpected costs and challenges during the transaction process, sellers that take the time to prepare for a home inspection benefit.

Here are several tips to complete when preparing for a home inspection in St. Croix.

✓ **Utilities.** Maintain power to the house. Leave all utility connections on and accounts current. Inspectors test every aspect of a house and document the performance of each item in their reports. If an item is not functioning it can impact the value of the property.

✓ **Directions.** Provide instructions, keys, and codes for everything. The most detail possible about where components are located and how they function is helpful. For example where the cistern, electrical panel, or water pump can be accessed. Also provide instructions or manuals for electric locks, generators, and appliances for the inspector. Especially if the appliance is out of the ordinary or is a newer technology, such as an induction cook surface, where an induction ready pot or pan needs to be left out for the inspector to test the appliance.

✓ **Machines.** Start-up and test the generator, making sure to have fresh fuel and oil. Again, leave instructions on how to start the equipment. The same goes for propane appliances, such as dryers or ovens. Make sure the propane tanks have enough propane for the inspector to turn everything on and test.

✓ **Batteries.** Check all your monitors and battery operated devices. Monitors such as fire or carbon monoxide detectors and battery powered items such as electronic locks or AC remotes.

✓ **Cisterns and Pools.** Open up cistern access points and leave any required key or handle laid out for the inspector. Make sure the access points are easy to open and have not been caulked or grouted shut. Measure cistern water levels and make sure you have enough water for the inspector to test the pressure at each faucet. This is a great time to change your water filters. Putting in new filters will

help your water system run more efficiently and provide the best water pressure possible for the time of inspection. For the pool, roll up the cover and display with the cover off and the water crystal clear. Remove any stains and repair or replace corroded or worn out parts. For example a cracked skimmer lid or a rusty handrail. Tidy up and organize the pool chemicals to present them in an easy way for both the inspector and the buyer to better understand. Lastly, make sure all pool gates, handrails, or fencing is in working order.

✓ **Landscaping.** Check to make sure that the earth slopes away from your foundation or any areas where the ground comes in contact with the house. This is to ensure water drains away from the structure. This is especially important in St. Croix's tropical environment where it can rain often and in large volumes. This weather pattern encourages awesome growth in our vegetation. So much so, that at times it seems that the bush can take over any structure. Take a look at any overhanging trees or plants and trim any that may be on top of the roof or blocking walking paths and windows.

✓ **Debris.** Clear out trash, bugs, or unnecessary items and provide easy access to important components of your house. Make sure that the inspector can walk-through every room, hallway, closet, or garage. Consider making access to under the sink plumbing or hot water heater connections easier by removing personal items. This is a good time to mention that inspectors are humans too. The property's accessibility and appearance can play a role in the outcome of the inspection report. To get a better outcome, deep clean everything. Make the house shine and smell sweet. Conveying to the inspector that the house has been under great care is important.

✓ **Day of Inspection.** Unlock, open-up, and turn-on everything. Crank open all louver windows, unlock all doors, and take off any padlocks on storage spaces. Turn on light fixtures and ceiling fans. Once the house is ready for inspection, grab all the animals and head to the beach or the bar... Inspections on St. Croix may take 3 to 4 hours to complete. Make arrangements to be away from the house during that time to give the inspector and the buyer a private and positive experience.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED PROPERTIES

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355 WHIM | MLS 20-559 | \$979,000

Enjoy island living at its best in this unique waterfront home situated on a private peninsula between Sandy Point National Preserve and Long Point St Croix. Designed by Renee D'Adamo, for this unique location, the house, built with 8-inch poured concrete walls throughout, showcases the gorgeous beach views and the incredible sunsets. The large wrap-around gallery embraces the living room, custom eat-in kitchen, with Mahogany cabinets and the two large bedroom suites at either end. Three big bathrooms all have open-to-the-sky showers. A terrific dining gazebo, pool and large deck make the perfect home for relaxation and entertaining.

Listing courtesy of Isabel Brady



17B SALLY'S FANCY | MLS 20-560 | \$469,000

Great spacious home with a pool, net metering and battery back up. Excess power generated every month! The outdoor living space and large fenced yard are perfect for the pets to enjoy the cool breezes that blow off the sea. Lots and lots of fruit trees are yours for the picking including mango, guava, key lime, coconuts, banana, avocado, and genip. Tucked back into a small neighborhood you will enjoy the peace and quiet that is afforded you with your small but gorgeous south shore sea view. Minutes from town but a country feeling is what this home offers.

Listing courtesy of Debby Babb



G4 CORAL PRINCESSE | MLS 20-511 | \$160,000

Top floor condo with each room overlooking the sea and the islands to the north. Three large sliding doors provide great breezes and access to a large balcony. Formerly a two bedroom, used now as a one bedroom with a formal dining room. Unique tile, furniture, and artwork throughout the bright and airy living space creates a colorful atmosphere. G-4 is a versatile condo with great views ready for the next artist's vision and care.

Listing courtesy of Dan Savaro



7B JOLLY HILL | MLS 20-534 | \$73,000

Beautiful land over 2 acres in the Rain Forest. This gently sloping lot, zoned A-2 gives plenty space for a home site as well as multiple agricultural opportunities. Less than 3 miles from Frederiksted town for easy access.

Listing courtesy of Diane Burns



86 CASTLE COAKLEY | MLS 20-301 | \$1,000,000

HUGE 2-STORY HIGH TRAFFIC COMMERCIAL BUILDING IN CASTLE COAKLEY! Ideal for a variety of commercial uses, this 11,000 sq. ft. Southern Structures design built in 1992 has concrete floors, steel girders, storm panels, and galvalume roof. Road frontage on two sides, fully gated with 13 security cameras and security quarters. Currently being used for the manufacture of awnings, there is a wash bay, welding area, and paint mixing station. The fully modular design allows each of the five lower bays to be rented separately or opened up for one large warehouse, retail, or manufacturing space. This property also features 3BAs, a 50,000-gallon cistern, and generator.

Listing courtesy of David Fedeles



ST. CROIX REAL ESTATE MARKET WATCH

CLOSED SALES COMPARISON :3/31/18-3/31/19 VERSUS 3/31/19-3/31/20

	2018-2019 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	MEDIAN SOLD PRICE	2019-2020 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	MEDIAN SOLD PRICE
Home Sales	229	288	\$279,000	170	245	\$306,000 ↑
Condo Sales	134	205	\$164,000	111	177	\$209,000 ↑
Land under \$39,999	62	337	\$27,000	65 ↑	358	\$27,500 ↑
Land over \$40,000	65	384	\$77,500	68 ↑	416	\$72,125
Commercial	14	305	\$465,000	10	565	\$325,000

Information from the St. Croix Multiple Listing Service

* The average sales price and the average days on market could be skewed greatly by only one sale or because of the small number of annual sales.

The Good News...
**CONDOS
SOLD FOR
27%
MORE**

Through March 2020, compared to the same period last year.

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