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# ST. CROIX REAL ESTATE NEWS

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## In Full Bloom THE WIDESPREAD VIBRANCY OF FLAMBOYANT TREES

It would be almost impossible for one to overlook the bounty of blooming flowers all around St. Croix. 2022 has gifted us with an array of flourishing foliage that the island hasn't seen for a few years. The most notable of them all is the flamboyant tree. Known as the royal poinciana tree, the bursts of colors from the trees vibrant tropical flowers offer a welcomed sight for sore eyes. You can find these "flame trees" dotted all along the island's hillsides and roadsides during the warmer summer months. In full bloom, the flamboyant's stunning flower clusters cascade into a recognizable umbrella shape with hundreds of large, orange-red flowers made of six petals that measure about 4 inches in length.

Eleanor Gibney, an expert on Virgin Islands trees and history, believes that flamboyant trees were introduced into this area of the Caribbean around the mid-1800s, based on historical Caribbean plant lists. While these trees are native to Madagascar, an island off the coast of Africa, they were recorded as common in West Indian gardens by the 1880s. In addition to its flowering beauty, the flamboyant tree also provides musical instruments by way of the tree's seed pods. Long, slender and brown in color, these pods measure up to two feet in length. The loose seeds inside the pods make a rattling sound when you shake them, resulting in a musical percussion instrument known as the shack-shack.

Summers on St. Croix offer unique experiences like picking mango in the rainforest, enjoying the warmer-than-normal water temperature at the beach and breathtaking sunsets often accompanied by the iconic "green flash." Catching a glimpse of the magnificent foliage of the flamboyant tree is another reason why you should visit St. Croix when the weather is warm where you are. This is also the perfect time to explore what island living could be for you. Our agents at Coldwell Banker St. Croix would be happy to share several exceptional properties with you to jumpstart your path to homeownership in the Caribbean.

This newsletter written by Anquanette Gaspard [agaspard@cruzanfoodie.com](mailto:agaspard@cruzanfoodie.com)

## Message from Bry...



Bry Locher

Sunny Greetings from St. Croix! Summer is still in full swing here on the big island. Our farmers markets are bursting with ripe seasonal fruits and vegetables like mangoes, watermelons, zucchini, cucumbers and squash. While the stream of visitors to our shores have tempered a bit, tourism in the territory is still booming. Transportation Security Administration data showed that the USVI was the fastest-growing location for total airlift capacity in the Americas from 2019 to 2021. Additionally, the USVI cruise industry is expected to see triple the numbers of passengers in St Croix's cruise port in Frederiksted in 2023. More visitors mean more people will have the opportunity to fall in love with our island paradise, experiencing our friendly people, delicious foods and picture-perfect beaches.

This month, I am excited to share with you more of what makes St. Croix such a special place. You'll learn about one of the island's award-winning farms and their focus on the territory's agriculture resurgence. I'll also let you in on a secret about the benefits of summer travel to St. Croix as well as introduce you to the newest addition to the island's burgeoning nightlife.

If you plan on visiting us soon, don't forget our Coldwell Banker St. Croix Realty team is on hand to help you find the perfect home! With several exceptional properties to choose from, your dream of owning a slice of paradise can soon become a reality. Give us a call today; we'd love to hear from you.



*Bry*

Bry Locher,  
Regional Sales Director,  
Managing Broker  
Coldwell Banker St. Croix Realty

EACH OFFICE IS INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED





# EAT LOCAL, EAT FRESH

## *at Sejah Farm of the Virgin Islands*

**A**griculture has long been viewed as the key to unlock St. Croix's prosperity. Dale & Yvette Browne of Sejah Farm have shared this theory time and time again for the past twenty-four years. Since 1998, The Brownes have been tilling the land of their 15-acre farm in Estate Castle Burke providing local produce, eggs and meat to the St. Croix community. Much of their land is used for sheep and goat grazing where they raise Boer Goats; three-quarter acres are used for poultry production. "It is our mission to produce the finest quality raise meats – lamb, goat, and chicken – and organic vegetables in the U.S. Virgin Islands to meet the local market demand," said The Brownes.

Sejah Farm has been at the forefront of developing agriculture in the territory. Advocates for the development of the territory's agriculture resurgence, they are passionate about educating the community on the need to buy locally and eat fresh foods. "A local island food system is needed to ensure territory food sovereignty and security," said Dale. "We will continue to advocate and educate farmers and our community to grow, buy and eat local meat and produce." Additionally, they are ardent supporters of educational programs for young farmers. They recently received a World Central Kitchen grant to create a learning center where local producers can gain the knowledge and skills to grow their business and advance food and nutrition security across the Virgin Islands.

Their annual Bush Cook Chef Cook event is where the island's best and brightest chefs use their ingenuity to prepare unique dishes using the crops and produce available to them. Armed with cooking tools and personal condiments, everything else is provided to

them including the coal to build their outdoor fires. The three-day event features a full day of food demonstrations and ends with a farm-to-table dinner at Sejah Farm.

With events and initiatives like these, it's no wonder The Brownes believe that agritourism is the future. "We want to continue in this field of agritourism development, where visitors or locals on-island can come for a few hours and learn," said Dale. "We see the need for it, so we would like to see tours coming here. They get to experience eating

***Dale & Yvette Browne***



everything that's local, take the tour, have lunch if they want or stop in to enjoy a farm-to-table dinner."

Sejah Farm is located at #9B Castle Burke and open Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm and Saturday from 7am to 5pm. For more information, visit their website at [www.sejahfarm.com](http://www.sejahfarm.com) or call 340-277-6046/9392.





# CREATIVITY & COMMUNITY CONNECT

## *at LEVELS VI*

Creativity and community connect at St. Croix's newest addition to the island's burgeoning nightlife. LEVELS is a live music venue, bar and creative space in downtown Christiansted that has been newly renovated and modernized to create a safe and fun place where everyone is welcome.

Sibling owners Andrea and Kamal Russell acquired the building in July 2019 with an intent focus on creating a space where artistry can be created and fostered by music lovers, artists and creatives in tune with the culture. The Russell family is no stranger to sharing the love of music with the community. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Russell family band would perform at various events and fundraisers throughout the community. Eddie Russell is the man behind the well-known Jazz in the Park at Fort Christianvaern. Most recently, Kamal Russell held a host of musically charged events under his KDM Productions brand. When opportunity knocked, Andrea and Kamal decided to transform the former nightclub and live music venue into a modernized version centered on creativity and community.

LEVELS is laser-focused on their goal to create a platform for local and independent creatives to showcase their art, whether music, performance, film

or mixed media. "Cultured creatives – and the community as a whole – are who we are trying to bring into the space. By building this community, we can expand our culture and create new ways of what it could look like, what it could be," said Kamal. The only staged indoor/outdoor live performance event space in Christiansted, LEVELS is home to many events centered on shining a light on the extraordinary local talent that often goes unrecognized. "We host a regular open mic night with amateur poets and performing artists are welcome to share this art."

Additionally, their series called "Between Two Speakers" is where local business owners are invited to tell their story to inspire other entrepreneurs. "Hearing from other entrepreneurs, someone is more inclined to have the confidence to try new things, think outside the box and to recognize that sometimes, there is no box."

As far as event spaces go, LEVELS has something for everyone. Its clean and modern décor combined with sweeping spaces and interwoven spaces makes this multi-level space perfect for private events and special occasions. Learn more about LEVELS, their upcoming

events and hours of operations at [www.levelsvi.com](http://www.levelsvi.com) or follow them on Facebook (@levelsvi) and Instagram (@levels.vi).

