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ST. CROIX REAL ESTATE NEWS

JULY 2021

THE WOVEN TIES THAT BIND

Photo by Debbie Sun

It's official! The US Virgin Islands has their very own madras fabric that represents the unique characteristics that make the territory the cherished Caribbean gem that it is. Originated in India, madras is a lightweight cotton fabric with a colorful patterned texture and distinctive plaid design that was named for the small, remote fishing village of Madraspatnam (Madras). It became a household fabric throughout the Caribbean when it was traded by Dutch and British settlers in the 1600s. Islands throughout the region have adopted their own unique madras pattern to use in their cultural costumes and modern-day clothing. On June 5th, 2021, the official Virgin Islands of the United States Madras fabric was unveiled to the public at the Frederick Dorsch Cultural Center in Frederiksted.

The official madras fabric was established by Act No. 8424 (BILL NO. 33-0226). This Act amended the Virgin Islands Code Title 1, Chapter 7 to establish the official Madras of the Virgin Islands of the United States. Thanks to a grant awarded by the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts to the St. Croix Heritage Dancers, the official design was created by local artist and textile designer Debbie Sun. The woven plaid consists of seven different colors:

- Green represents the islands' natural resources and production
- Turquoise represents the natural beauty of the waters of the territory
- Royal blue represents the deep sea and transport and discovery
- Red represents strength and love
- Pink represents the conch shell and the call to freedom
- Yellow represents the territory's official flower, the yellow cedar
- White represents the traditional dress made from flour sacks

St. Croix Heritage Dancers Vice President Alvin Milligan shared that "the vision is to have the Virgin Islands madras showcased on all cultural attired dancers and performers at the cultural events and pageants." Additionally, he anticipates that the fabric will be used in contemporary fashion and interior décor. The fabric is available for purchase on St. Croix at Divi Divi Fabrics, Ebbe's Store and Clara's Special Occasions.

This newsletter written by Anquanette Gaspard
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Message from Bry...



Bry Locher

Summer has been heating up here on St. Croix! We're continuing to see record numbers of visitors to the island who are experiencing the magic of St. Croix for the first time. The warm kindness of the local people, the flurry of flavors in our traditional dishes, the beautiful vistas along the north shore and the crystal-clear waters of our numerous beaches all come together to create a knockout travel combination that is hard to beat.

In this month's newsletter, I am thrilled to offer a glimpse into St. Croix's culture and way of life. I will be highlighting some of the island's cherished traditions that make this place a one-of-a-kind Caribbean gem. From our traditional fabric and jewelry to the fascinating protectors of our community, you'll get a better understanding of the things that make so many people fall in love with St. Croix and decide to make this island paradise their home.

We'd like to wish a Happy Emancipation Day to everyone in the US Virgin Islands! Each year on July 3rd, this public holiday is celebrated throughout the territory. It recognizes the day when the enslaved African people of the then Danish West Indies demanded and was granted their freedom in 1848. As we are a United States territory, we also celebrate Independence Day on July 4th. Happy 4th of July to all of our families, friends and clients near and far!

If you're visiting us soon and considering homeownership in the Caribbean, let our Coldwell Banker St. Croix Realty team help you find the perfect home! We have a number of properties we'd be happy to share with you ranging from single and multi-family homes and condos to commercial buildings and land. Give us a call today; we'd love to hear from you.



Bry

Bry Locher, Managing Broker
Coldwell Banker St. Croix Realty

EACH OFFICE IS INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED

Guardians of Culture **MOKO JUMBIES** Preserving Virgin Islands Culture



Photo by Nicole Canegata

One of the oldest parts of the cultural heritage of the Virgin Islands dates back to a time when enslaved Africans were brought to St. Croix over 400 years ago. Part of their culture that they brought with them was the practice of mocko jumbie. Mocko jumbies are traditional stilt dancers that dress in colorful clothing and wear a mask. When we see them at cultural celebrations, private parties and other special events, they are an immediate reminder of Virgin Islands history, heritage and culture. The word 'moko' comes from a Central African language meaning healer and 'jumbie' means ghost or spirit. Many African tribes view mocko jumbies as seekers, protectors or guardians of their village. Their height, which symbolizes the power of God, was believed to be their way of seeing evil before it arrived and would allow them to warn other villagers.

Here in the Virgin Islands, we call mocko jumbies the guardians of our culture. A performance troupe of the same name has been dedicated to preserving the art of stilt dancing in the Virgin Islands since 1979. Grooming and shaping the future generation of traditional stilt dancers, Guardians of Culture Moko Jumbies is led by Virgin Islander Willard John who is often heard saying "the best way to preserve culture is to live it." They infuse Caribbean excitement and Crucian flavor for private parties, weddings and cultural events. They meet, greet, perform, inform and interact for the delight of any audience.

John has trained over 400 young Virgin Islanders the traditional art of Moko Jumbie, volunteering his time, energy and undying love to the preservation of Virgin Islands culture. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, John, the Guardians of Culture staff and his team

of volunteers continue to do their part in keeping this rich Virgin Islands tradition alive. Senior ranking Jumbies gather weekly to teach, fix stilts and give guidance to up-and-coming Jumbies.

As a 100% volunteer and donor-based organization, Guardians of Culture Moko Jumbies rely on the support and sponsorship of people and businesses of the Virgin Islands community. They are currently raising funds to support the building project at their practice home in the Schjang ballpark in Estate St. John. Every Saturday from 9:30am-12:30pm, you can find the Guardians of Culture Moko Jumbies preserving the Virgin Islands culture the only way they know how – where "each one teach one!" To see them in action and to learn more, follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MokoJumbies>.

Get Hooked!



Photo by Shaun Matos

THE HISTORY OF THE CRUCIAN HOOK BRACELET

Photo courtesy of Sonya's Fine Island Jewelry

Imagine having a connection with a complete stranger thanks to a single piece of jewelry. It's no surprise to meet a person at the airport or in passing at the supermarket and strike up a conversation based on a distinctive handmade bracelet securely clasped on your wrist. This is what the infamous Crucian Hook Bracelet has done for almost sixty years!

This band-style bracelet was created in 1964 by Sonya Hough and features a horseshoe-shaped clasp that resembles a hook. The story behind the Crucian Hook Bracelet is one that symbolizes true love. It is said that if the bracelet is worn with the hook opening

pointing towards your heart, it means that your heart is taken. If the hook opening is worn away from your heart, it symbolizes that your heart is open and available to find true love. Each Crucian Hook

bracelets means they fall into one of three categories where the person is either: 1) from St. Croix, 2) live or lived on St. Croix or 3) visited and fell in love with St. Croix.

Each Crucian Hook Bracelet is made by hand, ensuring that no two bracelets will ever be exactly the same.

Bracelet is made by hand, ensuring that no two bracelets will ever be exactly the same.

Purchasing one of these iconic pieces while on St. Croix ushers you in as a member of a big global Crucian family. Wherever you happen to go in the world, seeing someone wearing one of these

If bracelets aren't your thing, not to worry as you can show your Crucian love with this same hook in a different form. Today you can find the hook cast into various jewelry pieces like rings, earrings and pendants. There's no doubt that you will visit St. Croix and leave with a host of memories that will remind you of the love you have for our island gem. Be sure to leave with a Crucian Hook Bracelet as a physical souvenir of your time here and a perfect reminder that you need to return soon.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED PROPERTIES



9 BOETZBERG | MLS 20-984 | \$1,485,000

A dream house! This custom built 3BD, 3BA main home is located in the sought-after neighborhood of Estate Boetzberg. It is located on 1.41 acres overlooking the Caribbean Sea. The open floor plan is great for entertaining and the outdoor space is expansive with outdoor covered dining around the pool. The property also boasts a 1300 square foot cottage with 2 bedrooms, full kitchen and laundry. Beautiful maintained grounds and gated driveway. Also has a newly built generator inside the 2-car garage. All new windows and doors as well as new central AC.

Listing courtesy of Kelly Odom

68 LA GRANGE | MLS 21-777 | \$445,000

Charming historic home in the quiet area of La Grange only a short distance from the beautiful beaches and calm waters of the west end. A rare find, the main house is 2 bedrooms with split AC, 1.5 baths, large living room with high tray ceiling and gingerbread transoms. West Indian louvered doors open to the dining room with big windows opening to the back courtyard. The two bedrooms share a jack and jill bathroom; the half bath is off the living room. Includes a spacious screened-in porch and a separate efficiency cottage.

Listing courtesy of Isabel Brady



24 & 24A ALL FOR THE BETTER | MLS 21-1016 | \$795,000

LIFE IS BETTER IN ALL FOR THE BETTER! This spacious and charming home is nestled in the hills of a desirable East End neighborhood, with an automatic gated entry. The 1.7 lushly landscaped acres offer stupendous views from Christiansted to Buck Island, and the distant islands plus a glistening 'lights at night' panorama too! This 3BR, 3BA upstairs w/ split AC in MBR and central in main, includes a 2nd AC in 2nd BR, a 1BR apt. w/ AC below w/its own private parking. Enjoy the breezes on the new enclosed porch off the great room or the pool on the wrap-around deck.

Listing courtesy of David Fedeles



H1 CORAL PRINCESSE | MLS 21-970 | \$135,000

Beautifully upgraded end unit on the ground floor with lovely ceramic tiles, granite kitchen counter top, custom built cabinets, copper bathroom sink, cypress ceilings, and so many beautiful details! It's ready for you to move in! Glass sliders in living room and bedroom allow sea breezes to enter and give access to the large patio. It's just a short walk to the community pool. Coin-op washers and dryers in condo complex. Close to restaurants, shopping, and just a short drive to Christiansted. Self insured. Cash sale only.

Listing courtesy of Julie Rasmussen and Chris Powers



4 & 5 ORANGE GROVE | MLS 21-964 | \$479,000

This Historic property, complete with a sugar mill, offers a plethora of opportunities for the buyer with an imagination. Once a beautiful Great House known as Cruzana Manor, the property dates back to Danish times. The property includes all the land to the right of the entrance road, which means plenty of room for parking and expansion. The pool and mill would make an excellent country club with many interesting spaces in the ruins for special occasions and restaurant possibilities since there is a building with a kitchen. 2.68 acres. The pool was recoated just prior to Maria and is in excellent shape.

Listing courtesy of Debby Babb



ST. CROIX REAL ESTATE MARKET WATCH

CLOSED SALES COMPARISON: 6/30/19-6/30/20 VERSUS 6/30/20-6/30/21

	2019-2020 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	MEDIAN SOLD PRICE	2020-2021 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	MEDIAN SOLD PRICE
Home Sales	159	263	\$330,000	209	283	\$450,000
Condo Sales	90	165	\$215,000	121	214	\$235,000
Land under \$39,999	64	357	\$28,450	75	403	\$29,000
Land over \$40,000	55	387	\$74,250	107	342	\$64,000
Commercial	10	570	\$325,000	15	421	\$380,000

The Good News...
**HOMES
SOLD FOR
36%
MORE**

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.

Through June, compared to the same period last year.