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St. Croix Real Estate reviews

Featuring Real Estate Market Updates and Local News of St. Croix, USVI

MAY 2019



Photo by Tim Linse

WE'RE #1!

St. Croix...A Diver's Paradise

If scuba diving is on your bucket list, we'll let you in on a secret that active divers already know: St. Croix has the best diving in the region. It's true! A *USA Today* readers' poll named Butler Bay on St. Croix's west end as the best dive site in the Caribbean.

What makes Butler Bay so special? The wide range of shipwrecks – six in all – make Butler Bay the ultimate location for dive enthusiasts. There are two deep wrecks and four shallow wrecks to explore, which means that Butler Bay is an ideal spot for divers at any skill level.

Whether you choose to explore one, several or all of these underwater treasures you're guaranteed an up-close look at the colorful sea life ranging from fish and stingrays to coral, sponges, and turtles.

Although Butler Bay is a quiet spot with generally calm waters, the wrecks are far enough off shore that shore diving is not recommended. Instead, take a dive boat tour from one of the island's many reputable dive shops and enjoy the camaraderie with fellow divers. The diversity of wrecks and the rich undersea scenery will keep you coming back to St. Croix again and again.

*This newsletter written by Jennifer Burns
jennifer.burns@amplivi.com*

Message from Bry...



Bry Locher

Memorial Day weekend may be the unofficial start of summer, but here in St. Croix summertime fun is already in full swing. Whether your idea of cooling off is actively participating in water activities or something more passive, there's something for everyone.

April was Earth Month but green living is year-round on our lovely slice of paradise. Healthy options are easy to come by, from finding organic vegetables and farm-raised meat for cooking at home, to dining out at the increasing number of restaurants offering organic choices. Add to that the countless number of ways to enjoy the outdoors— it's easy to feel that much more connected to Mother Earth while you're here.

May brings the last Art Thursday for the season, an event that showcases our island's artists and their creativity. Patrons can enjoy strolling through Christiansted while discovering unique paintings, sculptures, jewelry, and photography. Art Thursday resumes in the fall on November 21 and takes place every third Thursday - I highly recommend scheduling a visit around this fun event.

Of course, I'd like to wish all mothers a Happy Mother's Day! St. Croix is a magical location to create memories with your children and grandchildren.

Summertime is a great time to visit us. We welcome you to our Coldwell Banker St. Croix Realty offices in Christiansted and Frederiksted. We hope to see you soon!

Bry

Bry Locher, Managing Broker
Coldwell Banker St. Croix Realty

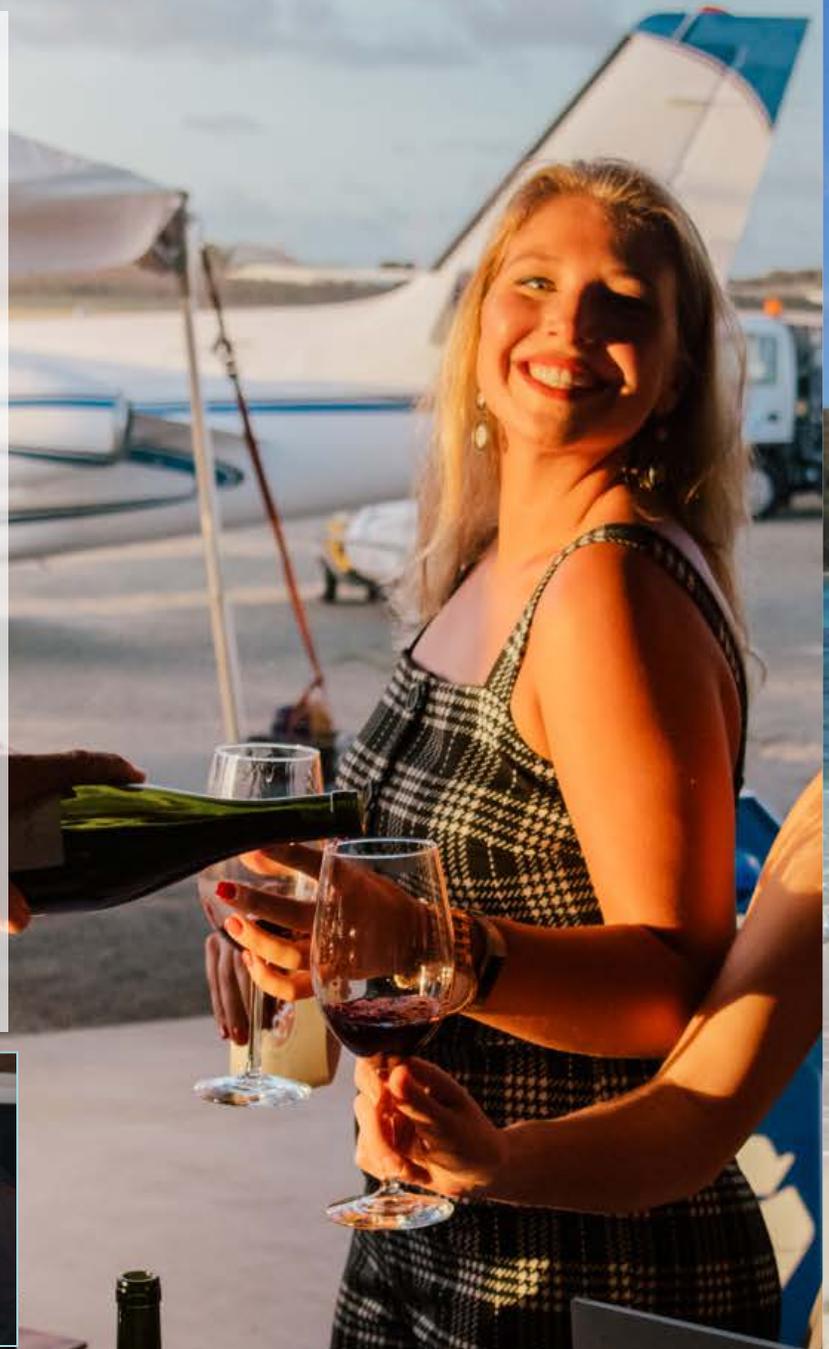


ST. CROIX FOOD WINE experience

The St. Croix Food and Wine Experience is an award-winning culinary festival celebrating the best of our island's cuisine, ambience, and generosity. Supporting the programs of the St. Croix Foundation, this year's Food and Wine Experience featured an amazing lineup of chefs and events.

Kicking off the celebration on Thursday was *bond@balter* that brought the community, along with visiting chefs and sponsors, together to learn about the organizations supported by the St. Croix Foundation. Friday's Sunset BBQ treated guests to island delights on the Frederiksted Pier, while Saturday's Cork and Fork hosted diners in an intimate venue at Estate One North with creations by Chef Dale Talde. Saturday's Wine in the Warehouse featured bites from around the island and wines from around the world at Bohlke International Airways' hangar. Sunday's Gourmet Vintner Dinner was held at the former Galleon Restaurant overlooking Green Cay Marina, featuring local chefs Digby Stridiron, Negust Kaza, and Amanda Dougherty, along with visiting celebrity chef Hugh Sinclair, better known as Jamaica's Chef Irie.

This year marked the St. Croix Food and Wine Experience's 12th year and proved to the region why St. Croix is a culinary destination worth talking about.



Photos by Malek Bascombe and St. Croix Food & Wine Experience.

So Many Plants, So Little Time

One stop that isn't always at the top of a visitor's itinerary - but should be - is a visit to one of our island's farm stands. There, you are guaranteed to have your choice of a wide variety of fruits and vegetables...some familiar, some not. Access to fresh, locally grown produce is part of the pleasure of living on an island. Eat the way we do and enjoy local fruit like mango, carambola, pomegranate, passionfruit, genip, soursop, eggfruit, and papaya. Many locals turn these into jams, chutneys, juices, and smoothies to enjoy long past each fruit's growing season.

Gardening is a year-round activity in our tropical climate, but knowing what and when to plant is the key to success. Yvette Browne of Sejah Farm recommends that backyard gardeners "Look for heat tolerant varieties on the seed packet label. This means your plants should have better germination, and once they sprout they will grow better in dry weather."

Browne also recommends keeping your garden to a small area. "We get insects with the dry weather, and they thrive in the heat," she explains. Maintaining a small

garden will help you keep the pests in check and manage your crops properly.

Luca Gasperi, owner of ARTfarm, encourages homeowners to use as much mulch as possible. "Mulch heavily, water deeply," he says. He suggests wood chips, hay, and even seaweed as sources of mulch, and recommends that gardeners water plants late in the afternoon to keep evaporation to a minimum. Wind can be a destroying factor for tender plants. While we love our Christmas winds, "They tend to dry everything out - so be careful planting that time of year," he adds.

Gasperi recommends homeowners look into Hugelkultur, an Eastern European horticultural technique that he's had some success with himself. Hugelkultur beds are efficient and low maintenance, and are known for producing large yields without the need for water. Wicking beds are another option that handle heat and drought much better than traditional planting.

Browne adds that this past growing season was very good. St. Croix's summer growing season, which includes watermelon, tomatoes, onions, herbs, and greens, looks as if it will be challenged by the current drought. Gasperi focuses his farming on the winter months because of his naturally drier south shore location.

In St. Croix you're almost always guaranteed to find fresh, locally grown produce at the grocery store, the market, or dining out. Farm-to-table isn't just trendy, it's a healthy choice and supports our local farmers.



Photo by Miguel Maldonado on Unsplash

SALT GREAT POND

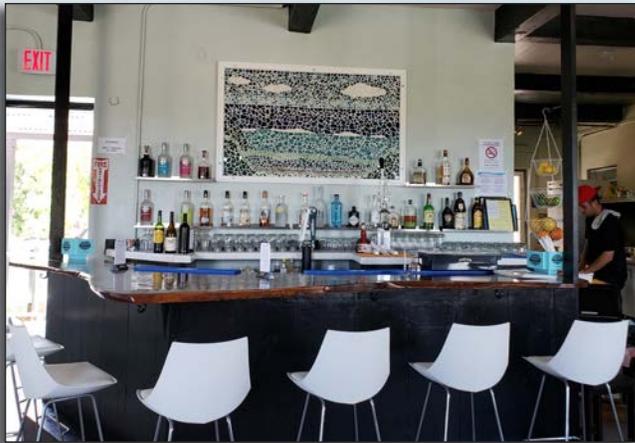


Photo by Jennifer Burns

It's just a short drive but feels a world away - that's what diners are saying about the new restaurant Salt - Great Pond. Located on a former dairy farm, owners Chris and Kelly Booth say

the restaurant has been open just a few months but it's clear they are quickly gaining a loyal following. The menu is full of fresh and local ingredients with something for everyone, whether you're a vegan, vegetarian, pescatarian, or carnivore. Chef Chris' idea was to create an eclectic menu with both small and big plates, inventive sandwiches, and the freshest ingredients he could find. That means that Salt - Great Pond is the perfect spot for

anyone looking for a hearty breakfast, a drink and a small bite, a full meal, or even dessert and coffee. Insider tip: the desserts are made in-house!

Cozy up to the mahogany bar and enjoy your favorite beverage and a creatively prepared cheese plate. The restaurant offers a full bar with your choice of local beer on tap, wine, and cocktails. Their wine selection includes bottles of white, rose, red, and port, with wines by the glass that can often only be found by the bottle at other restaurants on the island.

From one of the inside tables you can see Chef Chris and team preparing your meal. Outside on the covered patio you can take in the breeze.

And the name? It's a play on words, says Kelly. The restaurant overlooks St. Croix's Great Salt Pond.

Salt - Great Pond is open Sunday through Friday. Reservations are suggested for Friday evenings and Sunday Brunch. For hours check saltstx.com or Facebook @saltstx

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED PROPERTIES



2C North Slob

MLS 18-1008 **\$2,995,000**

'YACHT CLUB HILL' is an exceptional West Indian estate with a 3BD/4BA main home, and a 3BD/3BA guest house, each with its own pool and gated entrance. Unbeatable luxury and privacy, for a family or corporate entity seeking spectacular views, top of the line features, and energy efficiency. Split A/C throughout, on 8.4 acres of lush and very private grounds. Hi-tech net metering solar system, rich appointments and solid construction, offer unparalleled comfort. The main house has a gourmet kitchen and the sweeping West Indian welcome staircase gives way to separate masters. Entertaining is easy and convenient as the great room opens to the outdoor area with pool, BBQ and wet bar.

Listing courtesy of David Fedeles

MLS 18-885 **\$699,000**

2A & 3AA Northside

Big Sur of the Caribbean at a fraction of the price and sunsets galore! Prime waterfront property offers sweeping west facing views of the Caribbean Sea and gentle balmy breezes. Newly renovated with 3BD/2BA upstairs and bonus 1 BD/1 BA apartment downstairs. Beautifully remodeled in clean, soothing, soft grays with white accents, ready for your tropical colors. This peaceful and private residence offers new everything; electricity, plumbing, hurricane rated windows, full kitchen remodel with granite countertops and appliances in both units. New decks overlook the gorgeous Caribbean Sea and seashore below. It's almost like being on your own private island!

Listing courtesy of Diane Burns



61 Grange Stock

MLS 19-376 **\$499,000**

Custom 2BD round home by Deltec Homes featuring vaulted ceilings, hurricane resistant design, and large windows to bring in lots of light. Long deck (38ft!) provides for outdoor living and entertaining. Stairs off the deck lead to pool shaded by pergola which supports the newly installed 5.4KW solar panel system. Tesla Power Wall and diesel generator alleviate reliance on WAPA. Large 2BD apartment is great for guests or extra income. Learn more about benefits of Deltec Homes at <https://www.deltechomes.com/learn-more/hurricane-resistance/>. Adjacent plots 60 (2.416 acres) and 59 (2.444) acres are also listed for sale and could be purchased together for a total of 5.794 acres.

Listing courtesy of Bry Locher

MLS 19-724 **\$359,000**

J6 Coakley Bay

Absolutely lovely walk-in level 2BD, 2BA condo that's all on one level and has been fully upgraded. Mini split A/C's, renovated large closet combined with washer/dryer, on demand hot water, new built in pantry, and most fans are new. Lovely kitchen with granite counter tops, very nice gallery with beautiful views and breezes. Full generator backup power, on-site restaurant, and several nearby beaches. Perfect condo for year-round living or short term rentals.

Listing courtesy of Julie Rasmussen



203 La Vallee

MLS 19-534 **\$28,900**

Enjoy the incredible view and sunsets from this 0.48 acre lot on St. Croix's north shore. Just five minutes drive from Cane Bay beach, restaurants and some of the best diving in the world. Carambola Golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr., one of the most highly respected designers of the 20th century, is a short drive away too! The lot gets a great breeze and has power nearby. Please see documents for topography and location.

Listing courtesy of Sanni Craft

ST. CROIX REAL ESTATE MARKET WATCH

CLOSED SALES COMPARISON :4/30/17-4/30/18 VERSUS 4/30/18-4/30/19

	2017-2018 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	MEDIAN SOLD PRICE	2018-2019 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	MEDIAN SOLD PRICE
Home Sales	146	327	\$241,900	230 ↑	295	\$290,000 ↑
Condo Sales	77	229	\$155,000	138 ↑	214	\$166,000 ↑
Land under \$39,999	51	356	\$25,000	65 ↑	317	\$27,000 ↑
Land over \$40,000	37	500	\$90,000	64 ↑	379	\$79,500
Commercial	14	651	\$386,000	15 ↑	318	\$480,000 ↑

The Good News...

**79%
MORE
CONDOS
WERE SOLD**

Through this April, compared to the same period last year.

*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.*