YSKN MAGAZINE

# Your St. Kitts & Nevis

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR ST. KITTS AND NEVIS • 25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

2027 ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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# Your St. Kitts & Nevis

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE FOR ST. KITTS AND NEVIS • 25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



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*"My recent journey to Nigeria awakened my desire to combine paint with fabric, jewelry, cotton and found materials – blending art and craft into a multi-dimensional celebration of rich African art traditions."*
– VAUGHN ANSLYN on his inspiration for this year's cover art




Special thanks to the Nevis Tourism Authority for supporting our cover. www.nevisisland.com


Cover and inset photos both © Tina Papies






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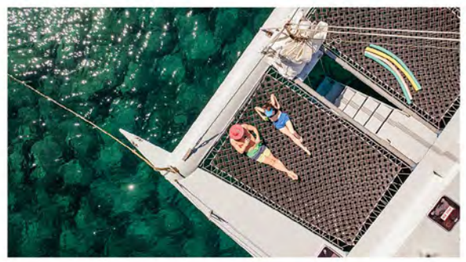
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# Your St. Kitts & Nevis

Your St. Kitts and Nevis Magazine
Basseterre, St. Kitts

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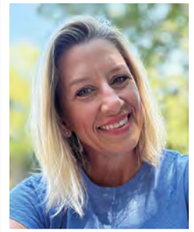
Copies of the 2027 issue are available from the publisher, and the full magazine is available as a PDF at www.yourstkittsandnevis.com


Click here for The Essentials: Everything you need to know about St. Kitts and Nevis from climate to currency and beyond.

## CONTRIBUTORS



**Sarah Freeman**
Spotlighting the unsung islanders – from mother-daughter culinary herbalists to a conch fisher – for this issue has reaffirmed to me that it's the people who really do make this place.



**Tina Papies**
I'm celebrating Vaughn Anslyn and his amazing art. It was inspiring to learn more about him and and so much fun to discover the vibrant murals (and their stories) all around Nevis.





**Toni Frederick-Armstrong**
This beautiful country wears its history proudly, in its streets, buildings and landscapes. One of the pleasures of researching and writing is discovering just how much survives. It's worth celebrating.




**Heidi Fagerberg**
The Federation is rich with remarkable people to celebrate, meaning there is never enough space to fully tell their stories. I'm grateful to everyone who has entrusted me with theirs.



**Katherine Barry Verano**
Talking legacy with the Lupinacci and Zuliani families was like traveling back in time and into the future simultaneously. How they honor their parents' pioneering spirits is a true inspiration.

**Suzanne Gordon**
Learning about Patricia Ellison's home-building journey was so enthralling. Her passion, her creativity and her organizational skills were the formula for her success. A genuine island dream come true!

**Charisse Leacock Wilkin**
I love the ancient saman tree at Romney Manor and the lush, tropical gardens where batik masterpieces come beautifully to life. Sharing it with my children is a pleasure.



All photos courtesy of contributors unless otherwise stated. Opposite: Photo © Tina Papies

### A LITTLE LOVE LETTER TO MY TEAM

*"Every magazine we have created carries a little piece of you within its pages. Your ideas, your creativity, your heart, your love. These 25 years would not be what they are without you. Thank you for believing, co-creating and walking this beautiful journey together"* SALISHA AYA, PUBLISHER







# Hello... & welcome!

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. WOW.

There is something quite incredible about being able to write those words here.

For 25 years, we have had the absolute privilege of telling the stories of St. Kitts and Nevis – celebrating the people, the places, the food, the art, the culture and all the little things that make these islands so very special. And how the world has changed.

We live in a time of scrolling and swiping, where everything moves so quickly and much of what we see disappears almost as fast as it arrives. And yet, here we are. Still making a magazine. Still choosing beautiful photographs. Still obsessing over words and pages. Still believing that stories deserve space, beauty deserves time and some things are simply worth making slowly. Maybe that is what I love most about what we do.

For 25 years, we haven't just been making a magazine. We have been capturing little pieces of these islands – the people, traditions, characters, places and stories that make St. Kitts and Nevis what they are, while celebrating all the incredible people dreaming, creating and shaping what comes next. That is my why. It always has been.

There is something so beautiful about knowing that you can hold all of this in your hands. Take it home. Keep it. And perhaps one day open it again and be transported back to a person, a place, a meal, a moment. St. Kitts and Nevis, waiting between the pages.

To everyone who has believed in us, supported us, created with us, shared their stories with us – and especially to you, our readers – thank you, from my heart.

Here's to 25 incredible years. And to all the beautiful stories still waiting to be told.

*Salisha Aya*
Publisher

For more from Salisha, click here.













**COVER STARS**

There is so much love behind choosing our cover each year. We come together, share our thoughts, take our time and care about every single detail until it feels just right. After 25 years of creating covers together, it's these four that bring smiles to our faces time and time again.

YSKN 2027

# WELCOME

## to St. Kitts & Nevis

St. Kitts Minister of Tourism and the Premier of Nevis jointly welcome you to our twin-island nation in this special anniversary edition of *Your St. Kitts and Nevis Magazine*, says *Sarah Freeman*

> "There is a particular pleasure in discovering St. Kitts slowly"



**THERE ARE PLACES YOU VISIT,** and there are places that stay with you. St. Kitts is the latter.

From the moment you look across our rolling mountains toward the sea, you begin to understand what makes this island different. Mountain and sea views are part of the landscape of everyday life here. Our rainforest rises deep and emerald green in the heart of St. Kitts, our coastline opens to wide horizons and between them is a place that still gives you something increasingly rare: room to breathe.

There is a particular pleasure in discovering St. Kitts slowly. An island drive can take you from the energy of Old Road into quiet villages; across changing landscapes and upward into the cool elevations of the interior. The rainforest holds its own atmosphere – alive with color, sound and movement, while the coastline opens into endless stretches of blue.

Our history is present in the architecture of Basseterre, in old estates and sugar country, in the stories carried through generations and in the traditions that continue to shape daily life. Our people give those places their meaning. A conversation over local food, a story shared by a guide, the work of an artisan or the welcome extended in a small community can tell you as much about St. Kitts as any landmark.

I invite you to spend time with the island in all its dimensions. Discover the details, follow your curiosity and allow yourself to wander beyond the expected.

On behalf of the people of St. Kitts, I warmly welcome you.

**Hon. Marsha T. Henderson**, Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, International Transport, Employment and Labour and Urban Development

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**AS PREMIER OF NEVIS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM,** it is my absolute pleasure to extend a warm Nevisian welcome to readers of this milestone 25th anniversary edition.

For a quarter of a century, this publication has served as a vibrant gateway to our twin-island paradise. Through rich storytelling, captivating imagery and insightful features on our luxury resorts, culture, farm-to-table dining, deep history and pristine natural beauty, the magazine continuously brings the spirit of St. Kitts and Nevis to life for travelers around the globe.

We are deeply grateful for the invaluable media exposure this platform has provided to our beloved Nevis. By showcasing our unique identity, quiet luxury and rich culture, the magazine has played an instrumental role in elevating our destination's global profile and connecting discerning visitors with the authentic heart of our island.

On behalf of the Nevis Island Administration and the people of Nevis, I extend my heartiest congratulations to Salisha Khan and her entire team. Thank you for twenty-five years of excellent coverage, dedication and unwavering passion for telling our island's story.

Here's to many more years of inspiring excellence!

**Hon. Mark Brantley,** Premier of Nevis

Photo © Daryl Grant, shot on location at Spice Mill Restaurant's Rooftop Terrace



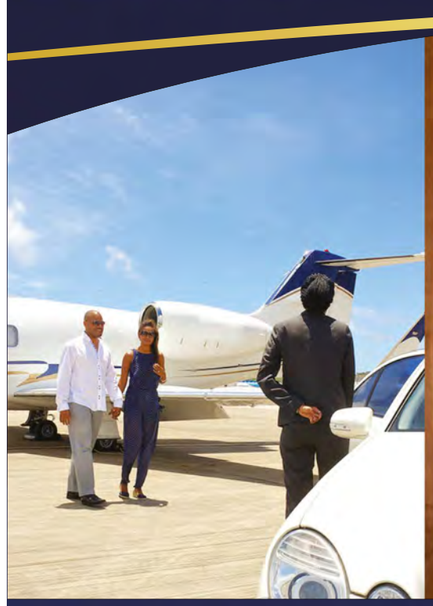




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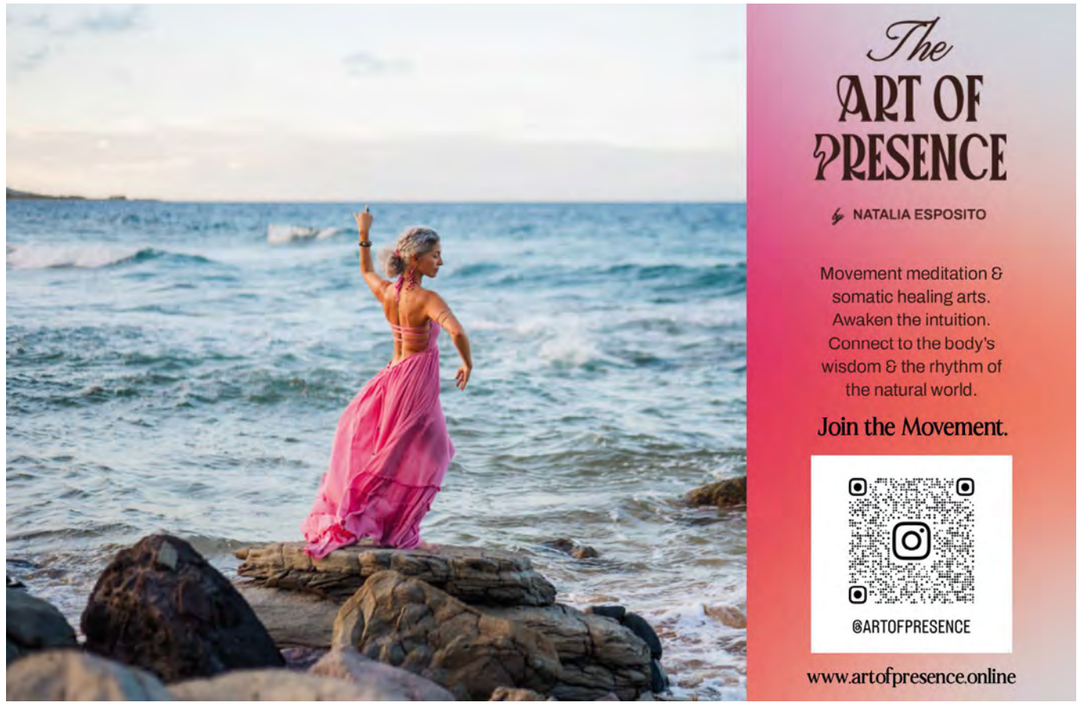





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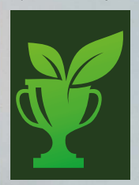
**NYKOS AND CHILL**

St. Kitts' newest sunset eyrie, Soho Lounge's rooftop restaurant Nykos brings big Greek island flavors to Frigate Bay. Craft cocktails such as the floral-esque Santorini Nights complement gourmet tapas like Lamb Pitas and Veggie Falafel Bites. Come for the DJ sets – a signature of their themed Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights – and stay for the shisha. +1 (869) 664-1224



## Going for Green!

St. Kitts cemented its eco credentials by scooping not one, but two regional accolades in 2026. The island was crowned "Sustainable Destination of the Year" by *Caribbean Journal* and the "Green Destination of the Year" at the E-Finity Caribbean Green Awards.



*"Soho Lounge's rooftop restaurant Nykos brings big Greek island flavors to Frigate Bay"*




**ISLAND-INSPIRED R&R**

**Nestled on the slopes of Mount Nevis, Golden Rock Inn is stepping up the serenity with a new micro spa. Curated by seasoned massagist and aesthetician Carol Curtis, the spa's expansive treatment menu features facials, waxing, nails and massages alongside signature rituals rooted in a sense of place. Non-staying guests of the lo-fi boutique hotel can also indulge in worth-the-splurge therapies like its fatigue-busting Nevis Foot Bush Bath Ceremony and 80-minute Mango Rum Glow Ritual. +1 (869) 668-5158**

# WHAT'S NEW!

From barefooted sea cycling to a vanilla-themed café, here's six more (new!) reasons to vacation in St. Kitts and Nevis, says *Sarah Freeman*

**A (HAND-PICKED) POD IN PARADISE**

**Vanilla Paradise's year-old namesake café is set on a working organic vanilla farm in Nevis' historic Hamilton Estate. Enjoy homemade granola and vanilla yogurt from its charming Crayola yellow-green porch overlooking a towering stone chimney. Equally instagrammable is their Vanilla Chiller served over a coffee ice cube and Liquid Gold, a vanilla-spiked, Aztec-inspired hot chocolate dreamt up by Swiss-British owner Gina Empson. www.vanilla-paradise-nevis.com**






**LOOKING SHIP SHAPE**

Visitors can take a deep dive into Nevis' naval past at its pocket-sized Maritime Museum, with exhibits ranging from fish trap-making to local piracy. Located a two-minute drive from Charlestown near the landmark Bath Hotel, its showpiece is Horatio Nelson's captain uniform and bicorn (cocked hat). Also newly opened and operated by the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society is next door's Nevis Centre for Archaeology Research. **www.nevisheritage.org/maritime-museum**

**PEDAL POWER** Switch up your perspective of St. Kitts with a Vacation St. Kitts barefoot sea cycle along a trinity of the island's scenic bays. Spotting starfish in gin-clear waters is a highlight of the novel 90-minute aquatic excursion, which can be self-guided or part of a group tour. www.vacationstkitts.com



Golden Rock Inn Spa, Nevis Maritime Museum and Vanilla Paradise Cafe photos © Tina Papies. Greece's national flag and Green Award photos both Shutterstock.com
















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# So glad You're Here

With luxury waiting from runway to resort and every stop between, the journey to paradise has never been more effortless BY CHARISSE LEACOCK WILKIN

The first impression of a destination lingers long after departure. In St. Kitts and Nevis, that impression begins before the first beach cocktail, the first dip in the sea or the first green-flash sunset. It begins with the arrival itself.

Not so long ago, reaching St. Kitts and Nevis required a commitment. Multiple connections, carefully timed regional flights and overnight layovers were often simply accepted as part of the journey.

Today, the voyage looks rather different. As the Federation continues to attract discerning travelers seeking privacy, authenticity and understated luxury, a collection of premium service providers has emerged to ensure that the approach to paradise is every bit as memorable as the destination beyond.

## TOUCHING DOWN

There are few arrivals in the Caribbean quite as spectacular as descending over the emerald slopes of Mount Liamuiga, watching rainforest-covered mountains tumble towards turquoise waters before touching down on one of the region's most beautiful islands.

Visitors can now reach St. Kitts directly from major international gateways including New York, Newark, Miami, Charlotte, Atlanta, Toronto and London, bringing the Federation within easier reach than ever before.

For those arriving by private aircraft, St. Kitts is home to the five-star Kayan Jet



Kayan Jet

**(www.kayanjet.com)**, one of only a handful of dedicated private aviation terminals in the Eastern Caribbean and widely regarded as one of the finest fixed-base operators in the region. Luxury vehicles meet passengers directly on the tarmac and escort them to the elegant private terminal to relax in comfort with refreshments in hand while immigration, customs and baggage formalities unfold discreetly. The result feels less like an airport arrival and more like a private members' club designed around privacy, efficiency and service.

Over on Nevis, private aircraft arriving at the smaller Vance W. Amory International Airport benefit from dedicated FBO handling services by Signature Flight Support **(www.signatureaviation.com)** that allow guests to transition seamlessly from runway to resort, villa or waiting water taxi with minimal delay.

For visitors continuing by road, St. Kitts / Nevis Luxury Transfers & Tours **(www.stkittsnevisluxurytaxitours.com)** offers a refined ground transfer experience, pairing professional drivers with comfortable luxury vehicles and local knowledge that transforms even the shortest drive into an introduction to the island itself. Whether bound for a beachfront resort, hillside villa or dinner on the Southeast Peninsula, the vacation begins the moment the car door closes.

## DOCKSIDE

For many guests, arriving by yacht or superyacht remains the ultimate luxury. It is a level of convenience and sophistication more commonly associated with the Mediterranean, yet in St. Kitts and Nevis is delivered with the warmth and hospitality for which the Federation is known.

Against the backdrop of the dramatic Southeast Peninsula, where rolling hills tumble towards secluded coves and the Caribbean Sea shifts from sapphire to turquoise, Safe Harbor St. Kitts **(www.safeharbor.com)** has ushered in a new era of first-class yachting arrivals.

The full-service marina combines modern berths with concierge support and streamlined arrival services, allowing guests to move effortlessly from vessel to villa, beach club or championship golf course within minutes of arrival. New docks capable of accommodating yachts up to 350 feet further cement St. Kitts' growing reputation as one of the Caribbean's premier yachting destinations.

"There are few arrivals in the Caribbean quite as spectacular as descending over the emerald slopes of Mount Liamuiga"

## ACROSS THE NARROWS

For many visitors, particularly those staying on Nevis, one final crossing remains. The two miles of water separating the sister islands may be short in distance, but the journey offers one of the most beautiful perspectives of the Federation. As the green hills of St. Kitts recede into the distance, the unmistakable silhouette of Nevis Peak rises from the sea ahead, announcing your arrival on the Caribbean's most charming little island.

One company, Islander Watersports **(www.islanderwatersportsnevis.net)**, has built its reputation on fast, comfortable and dependable private water transfers between St. Kitts and Nevis. Islander offers visitors a flexible and efficient way to move between the sister isles while enjoying some of the Federation's most beautiful coastal scenery.

Blu Waves **(www.bluwavesnevis.com)** brings a distinctly boutique touch to the crossing, welcoming guests with seamless transfers that feel less like transportation



iConnect Car Ferry

and more like the beginning of the holiday itself. Experienced captains and attentive crews transform the passage into a memorable part of the itinerary in its own right, with sea breezes and coastal views accompanying the short trip .

St. Kitts' shiny new iConnect sea bridge is also making a splash. The Grecian-built crimson vessel ferries visitors between Majors Bay in St. Kitts and Long Point in Nevis and can hold up to 200 passengers and 35 cars with four daily departures. **(www.iconnectskn.com)**

There was a time when reaching St. Kitts and Nevis required patience and a willingness to embrace the Caribbean's unpredictable travel rhythm. Reaching the islands may be easier than ever before, yet still, the hardest part is leaving. ■




Opposite: Marina photo courtesy of Safe Harbor St. Kitts; Airplane photo courtesy of Kayan Jet; This Page: iConnect Ferry © Tina Papies

# Taking Flight

We take not to the streets, but to the island's rugged and rural north to celebrate carnival couture and the 55th Anniversary of Sugar Mas, St. Kitts and Nevis' National Carnival

PHOTOGRAPHY: TINA PAPIES, ART DIRECTION: SARAH FREEMAN

Juli (left) wears Carnival Sweet Cane II Whispers of the Fields, which she wore as part of the Ultra Carnival mas band (troupe) in 2025's Sugar Mas 54

Nekirah (right and opposite) wears Fly, also worn as part of the Ultra Carnival troupe, who scooped the coveted Troupe of the Year title at Sugar Mas 54





*"My costume channels the elegance and power of the butterfly, a symbol of growth, elevation and the freedom found in motion"*

NEKIRAH NICHOLLS

## Juli Dion

**Canadian expat and freelance marketeer Juli waxes lyrical about being a mas player at her adopted home's biggest annual party.**



**Do you have a favorite day at St. Kitts three-week long Sugar Mas celebrations, and why?**

J'ouvert [held on Boxing Day] morning has become my favorite day of the year. Whether you're dancing in the streets, serving breakfast, driving a truck, cleaning the streets, looking after children or cheering on from the sidelines, everyone contributes to making it so special. It's a true community celebration: loud, messy, colorful and full of life!

**Tell me about your pre-parade rituals**

On the morning of the Grand Parade, which falls on New Year's Day, I'll have a big, nutritious smoothie and take my time getting ready. Sunscreen is essential, followed by long-wearing makeup (which I do myself), setting spray and a hairstyle that's secure enough to stay in place while still complementing my costume and headpiece.

**Talk me through the story behind your carnival costume worn for our fashion editorial**

My costume, Sweet Cane II, was a modern reinterpretation of the original Sweet Cane. It honors the tall, vibrant sugarcane fields that have shaped the island's history. My favorite element is always the headpiece, and this one represents both strength and beauty.

**How do you prepare for the physical toll of wearing such a heavy costume?**

It definitely gets easier with experience. Stamina is just as important as the dancing itself, so I like to stay active leading up to Carnival with plenty of stretching and extra dance practice. The backpack [the costume's supersized feathered, decorative piece] definitely adds some weight and can make certain movements more challenging, but it's all part of the experience.

**Name three things you love about Sugar Mas**

The joy, culture and incredible sense of community. I love how the whole island embraces Sugar Mas. It becomes the heartbeat of St. Kitts for an entire month.

**What are your go-to food and drink vendors or dishes during Carnival?**

Cheeseburgers from Friday's festival food stall, corn soup from the J'ouvert truck and meatballs from the parade troupe food truck. When it comes to drinks, I like coconut water (sometimes with a splash of vodka!).

**Can you offer some insider tips to any Sugar Mas virgins?**

Stay hydrated, wear comfortable shoes, take shade breaks whenever you can and don't be afraid to join in. Most importantly, don't try to rush. Slow down and soak up the atmosphere.

**And finally, do you find it strange celebrating Carnival over Christmas and New Year?**

Coming from a different culture, I've held onto the festive traditions that are most meaningful to me while embracing the unique way Christmas is celebrated in St. Kitts.

## Nekiah Nicholls

**Former Carnival Queen and Risk and Compliance Manager Nekirah gets real (and rhythmic!) about her Sugar Mas journey.**



**Would you call yourself a Sugar Mas veteran?**

I've been playing mas since I was a child. I took a break during my teenage years, but I've since returned after my studies and have been Queen of the Band [who wears the troupe's most elaborate costume] for Ultra Carnival for the past two years.

**Talk me through the concept and theme of your carnival costume worn for our fashion editorial**

My costume, named Fly by Ultra Carnival and worn during Sugar Mas 54, was inspired by Zeronites Youth Club's iconic "Come Fly With Me" theme (1983) and Inferno Mas Camp's "Earth Synergy" (2006). It channels the elegance and power of the butterfly, a symbol of growth, elevation and the freedom found in motion. Soft purple, pink, blue and yellow tones and iridescent hues shimmer across her form, while delicate appliqués and sweeping feather-work bring the illusion of lift and anchors her as the Sovereign of the Sky.

**How did you manage to move and dance with your full costume, wings and all?**

Although many mas players (queens and kings) make wearing the costumes look effortless, they're actually very weighty and seem to get even heavier as the day goes on. While you're on the road, the excitement and adrenaline makes masqueraders almost numb to the intensity of the bruises. But once the parade is over, you definitely feel the pain and discomfort.

**Sum up Sugar Mas in five words**

Laughter, release, culture, endless and celebrations.

**How do you refresh and refuel post-parade?**

After the parade, a cold Carib Brewery malt is always my go-to drink for recovery, and fish and breadfruit from Shomari's Fish & Fries [in Basseterre] is my comfort meal.

**Was being a National Carnival Queen Pageant contestant a dream of yours growing up?**

Yes, I actually really enjoy performing… probably the dancer in me. A former dance tutor of mine entered the competition, and she was my inspiration.

**What words of advice would you give aspiring Carnival Queens?**

Capitalize on the platform to make a positive impact on both your own life and your community. Be the kind of Queen you would want to look up to as a little girl, and strive to inspire the next generation of young girls to be the best version of themselves.

**How do you reflect on your time in the National Carnival Queen Competition?**

It was one of the most challenging, yet rewarding experiences of my life. It required preparation – physically, mentally and emotionally – and taught me the value of discipline, resilience, consistency and prioritizing health and wellness. ■







*"Be the kind of Queen you would want to look up to as a little girl, and strive to inspire the next generation of young girls to be the best version of themselves"*

NEKIRAH NICHOLLS

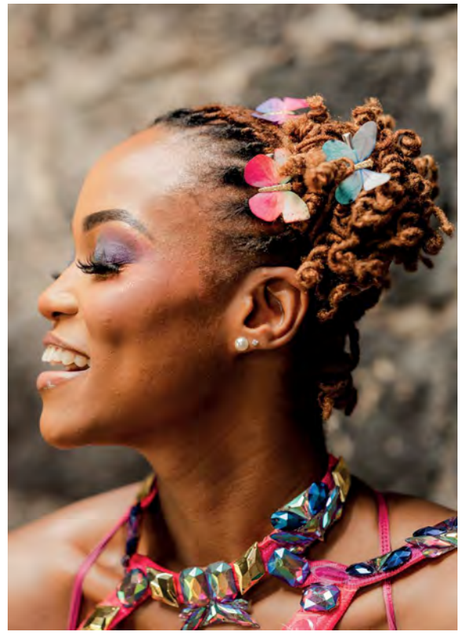
Click on the link to find out more about St. Kitts and Nevis' other fabulous festivals in 2027.





This year's St. Kitts and Nevis National Carnival runs from December 11, 2026 until January 2, 2027. **www.skncarnival.com**









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## ACCESSORIZE

Celebrate Caribbean culture, soul and individuality

Sugar City Fragrance Mist, Body Oil and Island Veil Insect Defense: Kitts & Co. at Bougainvillea Books & Gifts

Braided Necklace, Deborah Tyrell at Nevis Island Living

Charm Bracelet, Inspired Creations at Marriott Craft Market

Floral Top, Brown Sugar at Sugar Apple

Silk Wood Fan at Caribelle Batik

Bag at Caribelle Batik

"Celebrate Caribbean culture, soul and individuality"

# ISLANDSTYLE

From natural art and island-inspired accessories to soulful flavors, botanical beauty and wellness products, island-made spirits and stories to share, the creative heartbeat of St. Kitts & Nevis is strong. Discover the many talented crafters whose creative treasures capture the warmth, color, character and spirit of our island home, says *Heidi Fagerberg*

## SAVOR THE FLAVORS

Serve up tropical flavors, traditions and creativity

**1.** The Next Recipe and Dine With Me cookbooks, Chef Seth Saheli at Bougainvillea Books & Gifts **2.** Calabash Bowls and Coconut Spoons, Ital Creations at Bliss Farms **3.** Lion Rock BBQ Sauce, Lion Rock Beach Bar at Ram's Supermarket **4.** Star Fruit Pepper Sauce, Llewellyn's at Ram's Supermarket **5.** Sweet Potato Chips, Land of Beauty at Island Market **6.** Custom "Taste St. Kitts Nevis" Taster Box, Flauriel Foods at Di Organics Shoppe



Caribbean Essence Notebook, AnnaElli Digital at Di Organics Shoppe

Handcrafted Soap with Turmeric, Coconut Milk, Activated Charcoal & Wheat Germ at Cariborganics

Soursop Leaf Tincture, Native Radiance at Nevis Artisan Village

Coconut Lemongrass Hair & Skin Oil, Pure Niceness by Winnielle at her local pop-up shops

Caribbean Glow Shower Gel and Loofah, Yaphene Botanicals at Di Organics Shoppe

## REST, REFLECT, RENEW

Embrace the island's gifts for body, mind and soul

## TAKE IT HOME

ST. KITTS

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Photos © Tina Papies

## RAISE A GLASS

Toast to the island's bold flavors and spirited craftsmanship

**1.** Shipwreck Coconut Rum Cream, Brinley Gold at Corks & Screws **2.** Rumtini, HiBiscus Spirits at Spice Mill Gift Shop **3.** 12-Year Aged Rum; Old Road Rum Co. at Corks & Screws **4.** Nevis Spiced Rum, Clifton Estate at Corks & Screws

## CREATE, EXPLORE, PLAY

Pass on the stories, heritage and treasures of St. Kitts & Nevis to the children in your life with kinetic art, crafts and a heartwarming story

**1.** DIY Canvas Bag Paint Kit, Sassy V Collectibles at Bougainvillea Books & Gifts. **2.** Driftwood and Shell Wind Chime, Chris McEachranne at Bougainvillea Books & Gifts. **3.** Mermaid's Tears in a Bottle Nightlight, Beach Therapy Crafts at Alexander Hamilton Museum Gift Shop. **4.** Rose Grows Veggies Picture Book, Carlisle Richardson at Bougainvillea Books & Gifts. **5.** Twirling Shack Shacks, Phyllis Koppel at Bougainvillea Books & Gifts



























## CaribelleBatik

Step into history at Romney Manor, a timeless estate with origins dating back to the 1600s. Nestled within six acres of vibrant botanical gardens, Romney Manor is home to a majestic, 400-year-old saman tree that commands the landscape. With views cascading from tropical rainforests down terraced gardens, every step through this estate invites you to experience centuries of cultural and botanical heritage.

Your visit also includes access to our retail shop and a captivating demonstration area, where you'll witness the artistry of batik firsthand.

Watch as skilled artisans guide fabric through each intricate step of this centuries old process, from waxing and dyeing to the final reveal. Every piece is uniquely handcrafted, fully washable, and a lasting expression of Caribbean artistry.

After soaking in these memorable experiences, unwind at our Rainforest Bar. Sip on our internationally acclaimed Old Road Rum, enjoy a cold local beer, or simply take in the refreshing views that surround you. Romney Manor, where fond and lasting memories are created.

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Make a sacred bath part of your ritual practice to support mind and body

# RETURN to RITUAL

*Salisha Aya* explores the practice of daily rituals to calm the chaos of modern life

I was first introduced to sacred rituals by my grandmother, who was a Hindu ceremonialist. Amid the turbulence of my life, she showed me how to achieve calmness and connection by creating sacred space with incense, mantras and intention. But she didn't just teach me the practice of ritual; she gave me a tool to help navigate life's ups and downs, a tool for reclaiming control of my life.

Throughout history, ceremonial rituals were traditionally used to mark life's greatest transitions – the beginnings, the ends, the seasons, the harvests. These rites of passage shaped cultures, families and communities over thousands of years, yet somehow slowly faded from practice.

Today, however, there is a great planetary need for calm amidst chaos, and the power of ritual is resurging as people seek to reconnect to themselves, to each other and to something greater. Ritual provides the opportunity to tune into that frequency of oneness and bring a unifying sense of peace and purpose to mind, body and spirit.

Ritual draws heavily from eastern philosophies, tribal wisdom and indigenous practices, and these intentional moments of stillness help manage stress and improve overall well-being. It's a living practice that can transform something routine into something meaningful and bring peace and purpose into daily life.

And it doesn't have to be complicated. It could be as simple as taking five minutes with your morning coffee to light a candle and set an intention for your day or as elaborate as a sacred healing bath with specific scents, nourishing ingredients and candles. However you choose to craft it, your ritual will set you on a course for peaceful living in the modern world.

## CRAFTING YOUR RITUAL

To help you get started, I've highlighted a few of my favorite rituals along with a few tools to enhance your practice. If you'd like further guidance in creating a custom ritual, connect with me at **salishaaya@gmail.com**.

### Elements Of Ritual



- Set an intention
- Light a candle
- Sit in stillness
- Close in gratitude

## SAMPLE DAILY RITUAL IDEAS

### 1 Tea Ceremony

Tea ceremonies, which can be traced back millennia to ancient Asia, are still widely practiced in many cultures. Whether it's an elaborate Japanese-style tea ceremony or a singular cup in solitude, the practice can be highly restorative. Create your own tea ritual with high quality teas. **St. Kitts' Blissfully Balanced Tea (@blissfullybalancedteaco)** is my go-to choice. Set your intention, and choose your teas accordingly. For example, choose Rose to open your heart or Hibiscus to promote health and wellbeing. Light a candle, sit in stillness and drink with intention.



### 2 Tarot Reading

Tarot reading honors intuition and prompts mindfulness. The practice need not be elaborate nor take much time. Simply find a quiet place; light a candle; sit in stillness and set your intention. Once centered, lightly shuffle the deck and pull a card, which provides guidance for looking inward. Recite the card's message and take a moment to reflect on it.

If time permits, journal any thoughts or insights related to your intention. My favorite deck is the **Osho Zen Tarot (@tarotarts)**.




*"Select nourishing herbs to serve your intention and infuse the bath"*

### 3 Sacred Bath

A sacred bath elevates the traditional bathing ritual with a cleansing of energy and spirit. Select nourishing herbs to serve your intention and infuse the bath. You may choose oatmeal for calm, lavender for relaxation, even add Epsom salts for magnesium. I love to incorporate bath products by **Winnielle Pereira's Pure Niceness (@purenicenessbywinnielle)** and decorate my bath with hibiscus flowers or bougainvillea, which are plentiful in St. Kitts. Light a candle and soak for 15-20 mins. Post-bath, I re-hydrate with **CaribOrganic's body oil (@cariborganics)**.

When I need deeper restoration, I like to indulge in a Hammam Bath Ritual at **Go4Fit Spa (www.go4fitskn.com)**. ■



Go4Fit's Hammam Bath Ritual begins with warm steam to open the pores

## RITUAL ROUTINE

**Build a routine with practices and tips from these wellness professionals**

**SELF-CARE** "I maintain a steady ritual of yoga every morning, and at night, I practice the ancient Ayurvedic tradition of Abhyanga self-massage. This daily practice keeps me balanced and resets my nervous system, which in turn promotes deep healing." - **Dr. Miranda Fellows, Carib Wellness and Eden Life Rejuvenation Centre (@rejuvenate_skn)**

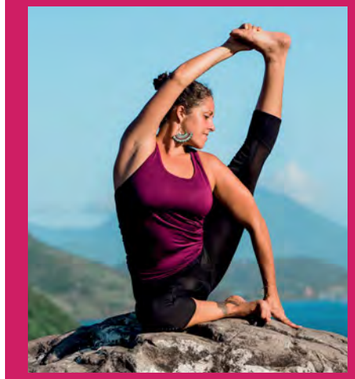




**DANCE** "Dance is particularly potent for expression of emotion. If I feel anxious, I shake it out. If I feel resistance to change or disappointment, I'll explore fluidity. It's not about perfection, but about trusting the body's natural inclination to lead over the mind. It's a way for the body to celebrate being alive – in all its complexity and waves." - **Natalia Esposito, Art of Presence (@artofpresence)**

**SOUND BATHING** "Sound bathing is a gentle wellness ritual that invites the body and mind to soften, slow down and return to balance. Through the calming vibrations of sound, we create space for deep rest, inner peace and a loving reconnection to ourselves." - **Dale Amory, Imagine Yoga and Sound Studio (@imagineyogastkitts)**





**DAILY MOVEMENT** "Setting an intention before your yoga practice deeper facilitates the yoking of mind, body and spirit, bringing the work you do on the mat into your daily life and taking the practice beyond just physical movement to a deeper holistic and spiritual ritual. The first word or phrase that comes to mind is often the right intention. Like planting a seed, cultivate it while you flow on the mat and use it as a point of focus to stay present, making the practice more meaningful and a tool of self-development." - **Cara Diskin, Yoga Divine (@yoga_divine_)**

Opposite page: Main image © Tina Papies, inset photos Shutterstock.com. This Page: Salisha, Natalia, Miranda © Tina Papies, inset photo Shutterstock.com. Panel: from top to bottom: © Tina Papies



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SCAN ME



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SCAN ME




# GENIEVE HANLEY

*the* "THE UNSTOPPABLE ADVOCATE FOR THE ARTS"

*"I'm so proud to have a 100% female team that's changing our little corner of the world"*

**"I CONSIDER MYSELF** the momma of many kids," LEAP (Learning and Empowerment through the Arts) founder Genieve Hanley tells me. A mother, dancer, teacher and entrepreneur, Cayman Island-born Genieve is a force of nature, and a tap dancing, pirouetting one at that!

After studying arts management in London – where she worked for several established music and performing arts venues like Ovalhouse – Genieve returned to St. Kitts and launched LEAP in 2010. "We're teaching our students [aged three through nineteen] not just how to move, but how to have a voice and interact with other people," she says. LEAP's weekly classes span dance genres from hip-hop to Afro-Caribbean.

"I'm so proud to have a 100% female team that's changing our little corner of the world. We staged a show in 2025 at St. Kitts' Sir Cecil Jacobs Auditorium about an all-female astronaut crew flying to space," she adds. Broadway and jazz-loving Genieve cites Misty Copeland – American Ballet Theatre's first black principal dancer — alongside LEAP's students as her biggest inspirations. "One of the things we're trying to foster at LEAP is this sense of family and community." Her students' greatest cheerleader, Genieve tells me, "I've gone on to watch them create their own dance studios and spaces. It's a ripple effect."

On a well-deserved day off from her physically and mentally demanding vocation, the documentary film enthusiast likes to staycation at tranquil hideaways like The Hermitage.Not one to take her twin-island home for granted, Genieve even finds joy in her daily commute. "I always love the Peninsula drive experience, whether it's early morning or late at night." www.leapskn.com ■



Who says you can't be playful and professional? Genieve strikes a (seated) pose in LEAP's St. Kitts studio

Click to read our extended interview with Genieve.

WORDS BY SARAH FREEMAN, PHOTOGRAPHY BY TINA PAPIES



African Sisters; Samuel Hunkins Drive Charlestown

# I WAS HERE

From the walls of Nevis to the cover of our 25th-anniversary edition, self-taught artist Vaughn Anslyn has spent a lifetime leaving his mark on the island he calls home, writes *Salisha Aya*

Vaughn and I have been friends for almost 20 years, and as a creative myself, I have always been fascinated by the way he sees the world. I first commissioned him to create décor for my events, and over the years I have watched his creativity unfold,



Artist Vaughn Anslyn poses in front of Free Dancer

evolve and, quite honestly, explode. His drive is extraordinary. I have rarely seen anyone who works with such intensity, determination and absolute commitment to his craft. Watching that journey inspires and motivates me enormously, but it also makes me incredibly proud. So, for this very special anniversary issue, it feels particularly meaningful to share Vaughn with you – not simply the artist behind our cover, but the man behind the art.

**Tell us about little Vaughn. What was he like growing up in Nevis?**

Growing up in Nevis was educational. I always felt like I didn't quite belong. The music I liked was different. I spoke differently. My style and appearance were different. I used to say, "I was born in Nevis, but I'm not from here." I was a friendly kid, but there were times when I just wanted to be alone. And I was curious. It was never enough for me to know that something worked – I wanted to know how and why it worked.

**What did your family think about your artistic dreams?**

For the most part, my family was very supportive of my ability. But when I started to venture into art as a career, my dad wasn't happy at all. He was a fisherman, just like his father and the father before him. As the only son, I was supposed to continue that legacy. But that was his dream, not mine, and up until the day he died, he expressed that disappointment.

> "Nevis is the source of my work. Its people, flora and fauna are right there, calling me"

**You never had formal training. How did you teach yourself?**

I'm totally self-taught. I would read, experiment with different styles and techniques, and keep working until I found my comfort zone.

**When did you realize you might actually be able to do this professionally?**

I entered an art competition, and when I showed my submission to my dad, he became very upset because he thought I'd traced it. With tears in my eyes, I ran to get the original image. Mine was larger, but when he put them side by side, he couldn't tell the difference. I remember the shock on his face.

**How has your style evolved throughout the years?**

As my work has become more refined, the only explanation I can give is that I see more. I see into the person, past the skin. I see sorrow, pain and happiness. This may sound strange, but I actually experience what I'm working on. I'll growl when I'm painting a tiger, smile when I draw a happy face and shed tears when I create a face of sadness.

**Who inspires you today?**

Inspiration has evolved for me. I used to draw it from a partner or a feeling, but those things change. Now I draw inspiration from within. I don't choose the subject; it chooses me. I am the vessel that brings it forth and gives it life.

**Is there something about Nevis that always finds its way into your work?**

Nevis is the source of my work. Its people, flora and fauna are right there, calling me. But it's not just the present – our African heritage finds its way into my work as well.

**When you're creating street murals, for whom are you creating them?**

Street murals, to me, are the ultimate form of self-expression. The subjects all have a link to local culture and expression, but I create them for me. Most of my street art is done without financial compensation. I wake up with an idea, find a wall and paint my feeling.

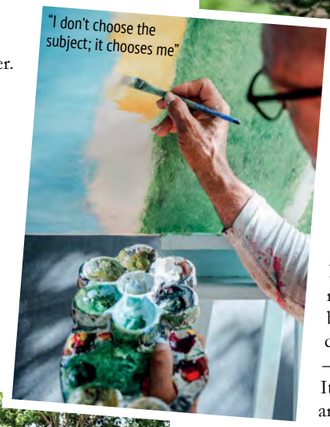
> "My depth, my contradictions and my calm are all parts of what make me whole"

**If someone had only one day on Nevis, to which mural would you send them first, and why?**

I would tell them to go to Chrishi Beach Club. Just before the entrance there are two yellow bridge markers on the roadside. Pull over, stand at these markers and look over. There, on the walls of the culvert, are two murals I painted during COVID. On one side is an image of a young boy with a tear in his eye, peeping through a crack in the wall. I call it *Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. We are on the inside looking out.



Caught Between a Rock and a Hard Place; Cades Bay




**What's the hardest part of painting a mural?**

Knowing when to stop. I always say, "I never finish a painting. I just stop working on it."

**What color represents your life right now?**

Blue. Not because it represents a mood, but because it's the most dominant color on Earth – the ocean and the sky. It's how I see myself. My artistic ability is the sky: never-ending, vast, endless. The ocean is me: never the same every day, or even every hour. Constant change. My depth, my contradictions and my calm are all parts of what make me whole.

**If you could leave one message on the walls of Nevis forever, what would it say?**

"I was here." ■



Monkey Eyes; Craddock Road, Charlestown



Free Dancer; Nevis Cultural Complex

All photos © Tina Papies

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THE STORY CONTINUES...

Scan the QR code to meet Vaughn, hear more of his story and discover the creative process and inspiration behind our 25th-anniversary cover.

To purchase our cover art *Cut From a Different Cloth* or other Vaughn originals, contact **The Olive Tree Nevis** at **+1 (869) 665-7019** for a viewing. For commissions, contact Vaughn at **vadesigns52@gmail.com** or find him online **@VaughnAnslyn**

Special thanks to the Nevis Tourism Authority for supporting this feature and our anniversary cover. **www.nevisisland.com**



Nigel (left) and Jerome (right) play their steel drum set against the backdrop of Cockleshell Beach and Nevis Peak

# DRUM and Faith

From family-founded pan bands to a new community-centered youth orchestra, St. Kitts is boldly marching to the beat of its own steel drum, says *Sarah Freeman*

"The chemistry between me and my brother is there," Nigel Prentice says as he and his brother Jerome down sticks from their steelpan set at Spice Mill Restaurant on Cockleshell Beach. Synonymous with the Caribbean, the pitched percussion instrument conjures up scenes of swaying palms and bottomless rum punches – not unlike Cockleshell itself – despite its origins being anything but paradisical.

## FROM SCRAP TO SOUND

Steel pans (or drums) were born out of the defiance, resourcefulness and creativity of Creole and African descendants living in Trinidad and Tobago's working-class neighborhoods during the 1930s. Bent on creating an instrument in place of the African drum – outlawed during colonial rule to prevent enslaved people from communicating with one another – they repurposed items from car parts to coffee tins to make the early steel pan. By the mid-forties, 55-gallon oil drums discarded by the U.S. Army during WWII were pounded into bowls, their surface hammered to produce the pan's distinct notes. From folk instrument to Intangible Cultural Heritage, the humble steel drum has earned its place in the global music scene.

## BAND OF BROTHERS

"Growing up, I would peer through the window to hear them play," Nigel later tells me from the same porch his father practiced on with the St. Christopher Steel Band, which Nigel is now one half of. "When my dad left to take the other band members home I would come outside and try to play what I had heard," says the full-time pannist (the name that is given to a steelpan musician).

"It isn't just music for carnival," Nigel animatedly tells me of his and Jerome's evergreen band. They're continuing their father's legacy by performing gigs – from birthdays to brunches – in all corners of the island. R&B-loving Nigel has a predilection for Boys II Men and Tevin Campbell, but says everything from hip hop to pop is on the table. Such a repertoire is largely thanks to steelpan's versatile sound, which covers multiple musical genres from classical to jazz. To emulate the full band sound as a steel drum duo, Nigel plays the single tenor (the lead) while Jerome supplies the backing and rhythm with his guitar (also known as cello) pan.

## DRUMMED INTO THEIR DNA

Similar to classical orchestras, larger steel drum bands rely on smaller soprano pans to hold the melody and larger pans to provide the punchy basslines. Bringing the baritone voice is the chord-strumming cello played by Shaqueed Benjamin, cofounder and bandleader of St. Kitts' Sugar City Steel Orchestra. Established in 2023, the 37-strong ensemble practices twice weekly at Basseterre's St. Johnsons Community Centre.

Sometimes they take their drums outside, where even the branches of the center's magnificent mango tree seem to sway to the rhythms of Caribbean reggae and classic Soca on the evening I drop in. No tune is off limits according to Shaqueed, who tells me "the band performed Daft Punk's 'Get Lucky' and recently learned 'Human Nature' by Michael Jackson," adding that pop is his favorite genre. "It's a style you don't expect on the pan," says the multi-instrumentalist, who's also a seasoned saxophonist and clarinetist. Not unlike his late father – a member of St. Kitts much-loved Maple Leaf Steel Band – pan is a passion and side hustle. An IT technician by trade, the entrepreneur also runs a record label management and production agency for local artists. Meanwhile, the orchestra's CEO and arranger (composer) DeJohn Francis is a high school tutor, teaching music alongside IT and carpentry. "I grew up listening to my father and uncle play pan in church. It's always been a part of me," he says.

## COMMUNITY MEETS COMPETITIVE SPIRIT

With almost four decades of pan playing between them, the dynamic duo, along with band leader Ayodele Decosta, are more than qualified to mentor St. Kitts' next generation of steel pannists. St. Johnsons Community Centre hosts twice-weekly after-school classes for Beach Allen Primary School's pupils, as well as weekend classes for all ages and all levels of experience.

Looking to the future, Shaqueed shares that he would like to see the orchestra "secure permanent sponsorship to help purchase more pans and expand their outreach programs." "The longevity of the instrument is our main goal," adds DeJohn, who's passionate about promoting and preserving the cultural heritage of steel drums through Pan Tourism, as well. "Since inception of the band we've brought in players from Antigua and Trinidad to participate in Panorama [a carnival steel band competition] with us."



Left to right: Sugar City Steel Orchestra Shaqueed Benjamin, DeJohn Francis and Ayodele Decosta



Sugar City Steel Orchestra perform in the 2025 Sugar Mas Panorama. Photo courtesy of the St. Kitts -Nevis National Carnival Committee (SKNNCC)



Members of the Sugar City Steel Orchestra practice beneath St. Johnsons Community Centre's magnificent mango tree

"I grew up listening to my father and uncle play pan in church"

All photos © Tina Papies unless otherwise stated

Panorama [a carnival steel band competition] with us." The homegrown orchestra was first runner-up at the 2025 Sugar Mas Panorama, held at the same venue as the island's annual Music Festival (SKMF).

St. Kitts thrummed even louder with the soulful sound of pan when Sugar City Steel Orchestra entertained their biggest crowd to-date at the 2025 SKMF. Merging with six-time Panorama champions The Bank of Nevis EBJ Harmonics Steel Orchestra to make St. Kitts Steel Orchestra, their rousing 25-minute set spanned Soca to zouk. "It felt like we were all coming together for the same purpose," Shaqueed says. "It's a night I will remember forever," adds DeJohn. ■

### PAN-ING OUT

■ **SUGAR CITY STEEL ORCHESTRA** partake in pan and grill gatherings and ticketed events such as "Pan, Paint and Sip" (a night of art, music and wine tastings) and the island's annual Tasting Showcase hosted at St. Kitts Eco Park. **+1 (869) 767-3336 or +1 (869) 762-7734**

■ **ST CHRISTOPHER STEEL BAND** are a firm fixture at the St. Kitts Marriott Beach Resort, Spice Mill Restaurant, The Sommelier's, Carambola Beach Club and the cruise ship terminal (mornings). **+1 (869) 668-7247**



Almena proudly rests one of Newcastle Pottery's monkey jars on her lap

# Vessels of RESILIENCE

All-natural Nevisian materials, ancestral knowledge and Afro-Caribbean cultural heritage all shape Newcastle Pottery's unique ceramics, says *Sarah Freeman*

"Kneading is the most therapeutic part of the process," former school teacher and fourth-generation potter Almena Cornelius tells me as her hands rhythmically manipulate the clay. The weathered walls of Newcastle Pottery – which takes its name from the coastal village where it's based – are as burnt sienna as the studio-shop's earthenware. Lining its timeworn shelves are miniature churches, candleholders and clay heads, while functional pieces like planters and Yabba cooking pots cast long shadows across the floor.

## MAKING THE FAMILY MOLD

These one-of-a-kind ceramics are the collective talents of Almena, Newcastle Pottery's Manager, and her cousin Mareelyn Evelyn, both of whom honed their craft under Almena's grandmother and aunt. "This is what my grandma would use to keep water chilled and purified before refrigeration existed," Almena says, cradling a sturdy-handled, oval-shaped vessel with an abbreviated spout. Known as a monkey jar, this ancient and ingenious technology cools stored water by letting a small amount filter through the porous clay. Almena recalls taking one twice the size to Texas in her hand luggage. Remarkably, it "got there in one piece!"

## UNEARTHING CLAY'S AFRICAN ROOTS

Much like other Caribbean islands, monkey jars were originally brought to Nevisian shores by African slaves during the late 17th century. Archaeological evidence from St. Kitts and Nevis plantations and military sites such as Brimstone Hill suggest that Afro-Caribbean earthenware was manufactured and marketed by enslaved women. Those forced into bondage were able to retain some small part of their African roots by using these ceramics for everything from cooking to trading.

More than a cottage industry, Newcastle Pottery's time-honored techniques, materials and generational knowledge serve as a connection to the Afro-Caribbean community to this day. The cultural significance of Almena and Mareelyn's ceramics is even the subject of a documentary – *Everything from the Soil: The Craft of Nevis Potters* – which was screened at The Charlestown Gallery Nevis in 2024.



Almena picks out rocks and roots from the locally harvested clay

## FROM BEACH TO BENCH

"We had T-shirts made with the motto Clay Ain't Dirt!," Almena animatedly says of the precious, but often overlooked natural resource foraged from nearby Herbert's Beach. A local truck conveys tons (quite literally!) of the native clay – which has a natural black pigment – to the studio-shop, where it's emptied into covered cement bins.

Almena fondly remembers her and Mareelyn digging and kneading the clay on their knees as children. From clay harvesting to open pit firing, Newcastle Pottery's ancestral-taught practices have scarcely changed, and this is precisely why their ceramics are a living heritage. Almena explains that after soaking the dredged clay in water, it's left overnight, before rocks and roots are removed by hand the following day. A machine is then used to mix it in preparation for kneading on a molding table or bench.

> "Palm tree leaves, along with coconut husks and even cow dung ignite a very special bonfire"

To build the structure of their glazeless vessels – the mainstay of Newcastle Pottery's small-batch production – Almena and Mareelyn use a millennia-old hand-building technique known as the coil clay method. The clay is hand-rolled into cylindrical sausages of even width, which are then stacked one on top of the other to create the ceramic. A true Nevisian tool kit, an island-found tumbled stone is used to burnish the leather-hard clay's surface while a pottery rib hewn from local wood helps define the form.

## A FIERY FINALE

As for the ceramics' rich terracotta hue, that can be attributed to the final and most primitive part of the process: pit firing. "The greenware [unfired pottery] goes from black to red when it's fired because of the iron oxides in the clay," Almena says while bending down to pick up a palm frond. Palm tree leaves, along with coconut husks and even cow dung ignite a very special bonfire. Rather than using a kiln, the pottery is pit-fired: a signature technique of Afro-Caribbean pottery dating back to the 1600s. Also a generational-learned practice, the greenware is arranged in a single layer that's blanketed with broken ceramic shards to prevent thermal shock. Almena explains that the pottery can bake in two and a half hours if strong enough winds are harnessed.

The entire process of drying, firing and finishing can take up to one and a half weeks; a physically-demanding job. As Almena and Mareelyn approach retirement, the future of Newcastle Pottery remains uncertain as they are the last remaining practitioners on Nevis.

One thing is certain though. These unique vessels will continue to hold the stories and skills not only of Almena and her forebears, but the African ancestors of countless Nevisians.

**Newcastle Pottery +1 (869) 469-9746**



Almena deftly shapes the lid of a clay vessel on her trusty molding table



Burnishing the clay with a tumbled stone



The display shelves are lined with many treasures, including this tea light holder



Photos © Tina Paules

## YABBA DABBA... COOK!

Directly translated as "earthen vessel" or "dish," the Yabba pot is a cultural symbol in its own right. West African in origin and brought to Caribbean shores in the 17th century, it's a mainstay of Ital cooking. The Rastafarian community credits the pot with preserving their plant-based food's "vital" life energy. The hot coal-heated Yabba is also said to imbue Ital dishes like slow-cooked coconut milk vegetable stew with a distinctive earthy flavor.



Almena prepares the pit fire



The Circus, Basseterre. Early 20th century hand-colored postcard by A. M. Losada of The Circus and Berkeley Memorial Clock c. 1908

# How Commerce *Built* A CAPITAL

*Toni Frederick-Armstrong* explores how centuries of trade shaped the streets, businesses and enduring character of historic Basseterre

Few Caribbean capitals preserve their commercial heritage as vividly as Basseterre. While many historic trading towns gradually surrendered their character to modern development, Basseterre remains a place where the past feels remarkably close. Stroll its streets and you'll discover elegant Georgian-inspired buildings, stately stone façades, graceful arcades and long-established businesses that still occupy locations where merchants traded more than a century ago. It's a town where history isn't confined to museums. It lives in the architecture, the streetscape and the enduring spirit of enterprise that has shaped St. Kitts for generations.

Commerce has always been central to Basseterre's story, but the bustling town that visitors experience today was born from profound social and economic change. Before Emancipation in 1834, the economy of St. Kitts revolved mostly around sugar. Trade was conducted primarily with Britain, and sugar served as the island's principal export and medium of exchange. Because hard currency was scarce, a strong local merchant class had little opportunity to emerge; wealth remained concentrated among owners of plantations, and routine commercial activity was limited. Emancipation changed that reality.

## EMANCIPATION TRANSFORMATION

Post-emancipation, formerly enslaved people began receiving their modest wages in cash. This shift introduced a money economy that quickly stimulated local trade and created demand (albeit limited by purchasing power) for goods and services. As families sought clothing, food, household items and imported products, shops multiplied across Basseterre, and the town evolved into the island's commercial heart.

By the turn of the 20th century, the streets of Basseterre were lined with merchants serving an increasingly diverse community. Prosperous business owners operated from handsome two-story buildings, conducting business on the ground floor while living upstairs. Well-known merchant families became prominent figures in the island's commercial life.

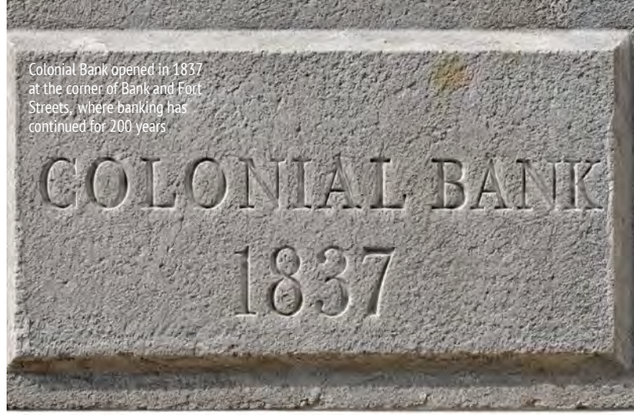
## IMMIGRANT IMPACT

Another remarkable chapter in Basseterre's commercial history was written by immigrants. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, Portuguese families from Madeira and Lebanese merchants from what was then Greater Syria arrived in St. Kitts and gradually established businesses in town. They became central figures in the island's commercial development helping to diversify the country's economy beyond sugar and grow Basseterre as a thriving commercial center.

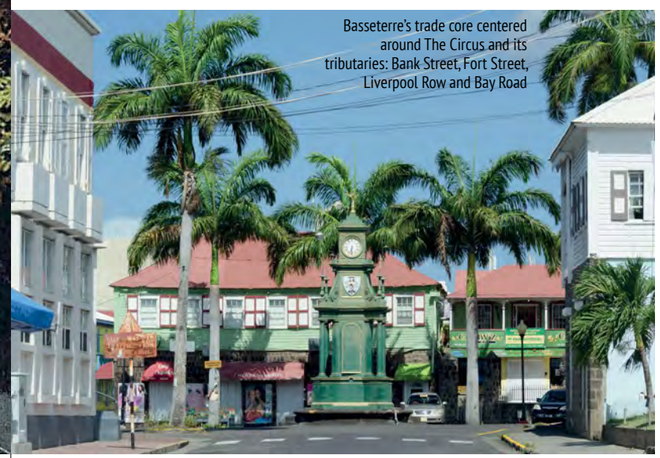
Many familiar Lebanese names, including Astaphan, Coury, Kowaja and Sahely remain part of St. Kitts' commercial landscape today, and while Portuguese families drifted out of retail by the mid-20th century, surnames such as Vieira, Gonsalves, Pereira and Dias are still



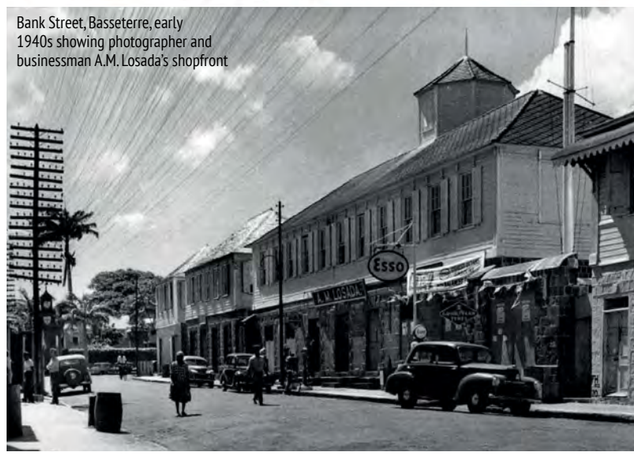

Both established in the late 1800s, the Delisle and Walwyn companies merged in 1951. It is the oldest privately owned LLC in The Federation




Colonial Bank opened in 1837 at the corner of Bank and Fort Streets, where banking has continued for 200 years



Basseterre's trade core centered around The Circus and its tributaries: Bank Street, Fort Street, Liverpool Row and Bay Road




Bank Street, Basseterre, early 1940s showing photographer and businessman A.M. Losada's shopfront

Historic Circus postcard by A. Moure Losada; Modern Circus © Glenroy Blanchette / Shutterstock.com; Delisle Walwyn photo courtesy of the company; Cornerstone courtesy of the author; Bank Street photo by Sherrit's Photo Lab

prominent in the wider community.

While larger businesses ebbed and flowed over time, a handful have survived for more than a century. Companies such as TDC, S.L. Horsford & Co. Ltd. and Delisle Walwyn all trace their origins to the 19th century, making them among the Caribbean's oldest continuously operated commercial enterprises.

## EXPANDING INSTITUTIONS

As commerce expanded, so too did the institutions that supported it. Colonial Bank opened in Basseterre on August 1, 1837, just three years after Emancipation. Although fire destroyed the original building in 1867 and an earthquake later damaged its replacement, banking continues from the same prominent site on Bank Street nearly two centuries later. Now home to CIBC First Caribbean Bank, the original building's cornerstone inscribed "COLONIAL BANK 1837" survives as a quiet reminder of its continuity.

Established in Basseterre in 1915, The Royal Bank of Canada constructed the elegant building at the corner of Bay Road and The Circus in the heart of downtown in 1921. More than a hundred years later, the Bank of Nevis acquired the majority shareholding in the bank and operates today from the original building, where the Corinthian columns still frame its entrance and link another chapter of Basseterre's commercial past to its present.

Throughout the 20th century, the

*"While larger businesses ebbed and flowed over time, a handful have survived for more than a century."*

business sector continued to evolve, and in 1949, the St. Kitts and Nevis Chamber of Commerce was established. Its founding reflected the growing importance of local enterprise beyond the sugar industry. Today's Chamber represents businesses across all industry and commerce sectors.

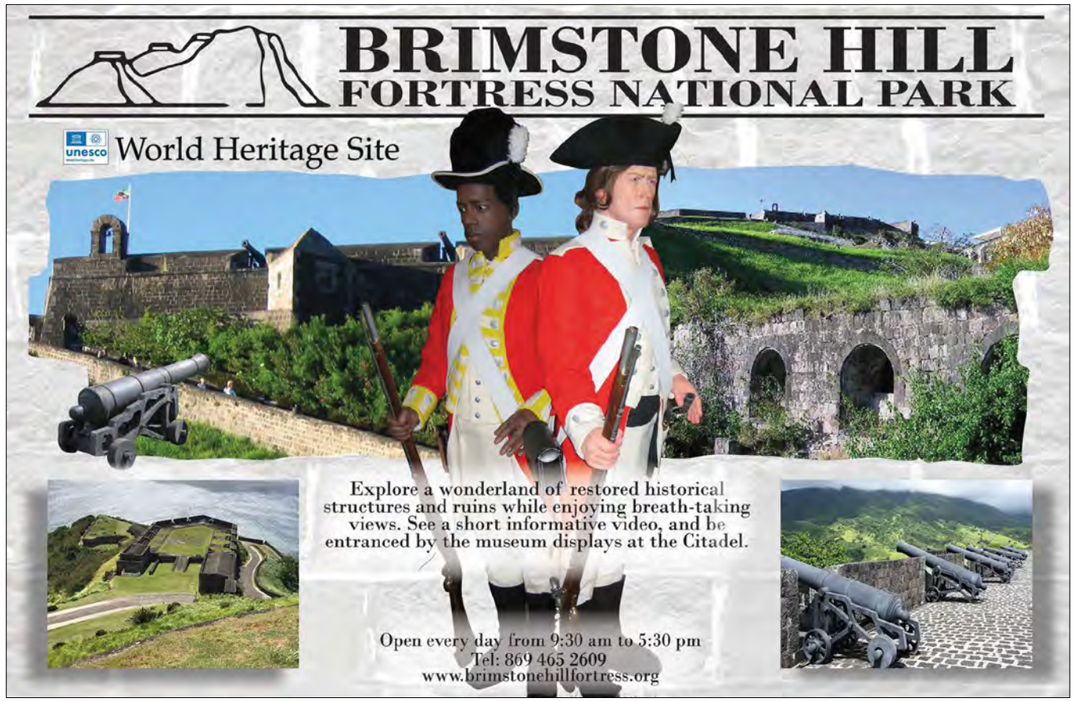
Former Minister of Tourism, International Trade, Industry and Commerce Ricky Skerritt recalls the Chamber's deliberate decision to preserve the capital's "uniqueness and authenticity." Skerritt, who served as Executive Director of the Chamber and later as President, explains that its members agreed to maintain existing architecture where possible or incorporate it into renovations.

The 2017 major renovation and reconstruction of the Delisle Walwyn building on Liverpool Row is an example of this effort. The company opted to keep the iconic building's original stonework façade. "It wasn't even a question of do we preserve it. It was just a question of how," Delisle Walwyn's Executive Chairman Clayton Perkins said.

## LIVING HISTORY

Every historic storefront, elegant commercial building, weathered stone wall and bustling street tells part of a story that spans centuries.

Perhaps that is Basseterre's greatest charm. Rather than presenting its history behind glass, the capital allows visitors to experience it where it happened. Shops still trade along streets as 19th-century merchants once did. Banks continue to operate from sites that have served the community for generations. Historic buildings still frame lively public spaces, creating the unmistakable feeling that the the island's rich commercial past never truly disappeared. ■









# Where History finds New Life

For centuries, Bath Hotel welcomed travelers seeking healing. Now, its careful restoration is preserving one of Nevis' most treasured historic landmarks

BY TONI FREDERICK-ARMSTRONG



Often cited as the Caribbean's first hotel, Bath Hotel with its adjoining hot springs was the hub of 18th-century Nevisian social life



Bath Hotel has looked out over Nevis since 1778

The Caribbean's oldest purpose-built hotel has watched over Nevis' greatest natural treasure for almost two and a half centuries. Built in 1778, Bath Hotel sits above the island's famous volcanic hot springs and served as a place of pleasure for wealthy travelers who were drawn to Nevis by the reputed healing qualities of the mineral-rich springs.

Bath Hotel established Nevis as a health, wellness and hospitality destination centuries before wellness travel became fashionable. Against the backdrop of tropical gardens and cooling trade winds, the imposing stone building was synonymous with leisure, refinement and retreat; its reputation extending well beyond the island's shores.

Today, Bath Hotel enters a new chapter. A carefully planned restoration is underway to preserve the structure, securing its place at the heart of the island's cultural heritage. "The Hotel restoration is progressing in phases with the main objective of preserving, stabilizing and protecting this historic landmark," says Heritage Sites Manager Carlton Meade, noting that masonry restoration, carpentry, electrical upgrades and roof repairs have already addressed years of deterioration while protecting the building's historic character.

> "The imposing stone building was synonymous with leisure, refinement and retreat"

The work is painstaking.

The multi-phase restoration, which began in February 2025, allows conservation work to progress as funding becomes available. The project received significant international support, including two grants totaling more than $400,000 USD from the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation that provided critical funding for the initial conservation work.

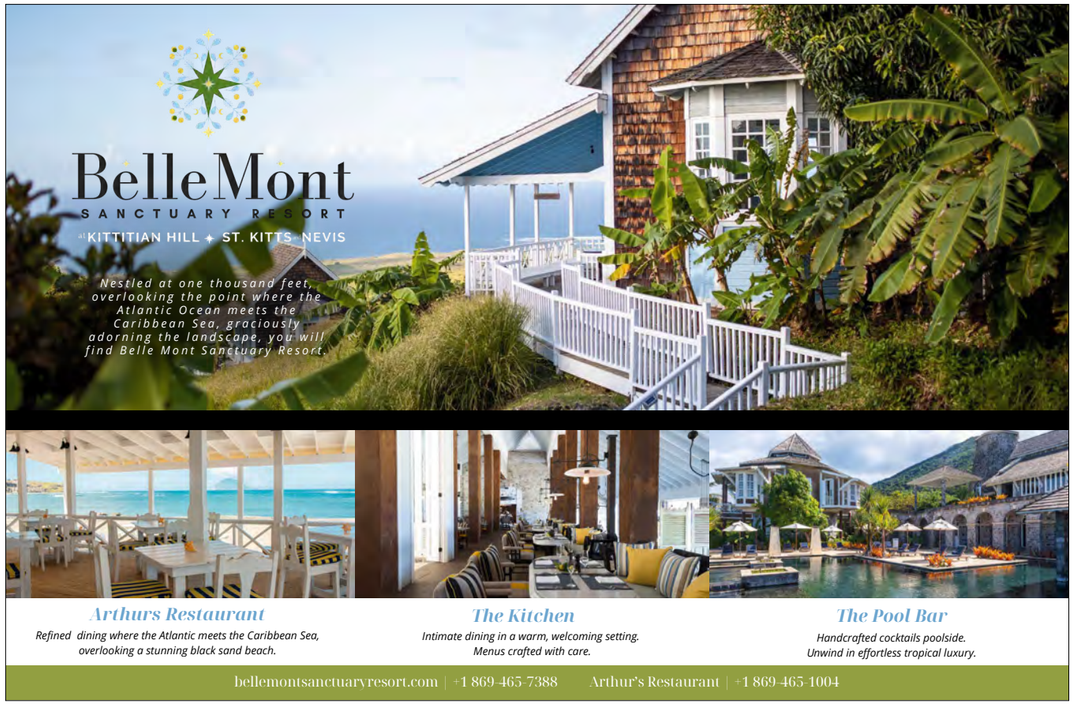
"We express our sincere appreciation to the Government and people of the United States for the grant support that has enabled this important phase of restoration and to the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society for its role in supporting and facilitating this initiative," Meade said, adding that "the long-term goal is to transform the site into a national heritage center and primary museum for Nevis."

Future visitors can expect curated museum exhibits, guided tours, and interactive digital displays as well as educational programs and heritage workshops. Select rooms will house period furnishings for a glimpse of life at the hotel during its golden years while a small café and quiet wellness spaces pay homage to the site's centuries-old association with health, healing and reflection.

Premier of Nevis Mark Brantley captures the project's significance: "The historic Bath Hotel has always held pride of place in Nevis. For centuries, it stood as the tallest building in Nevis and its very presence over those centuries speaks to the enduring strength and resilience of the Nevisian people."

For generations, the Bath Hotel welcomed those seeking renewal. Now, the building is being renewed to offer visitors something as valuable as its healing waters: a deeper understanding of Nevis' layered past, which it has quietly witnessed for nearly 250 years. **www.nevisheritage.org** ■

Main Photo © Tina Papies, inset photograph by Jose Anjo of Antigua {{PD-US}}


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# Living the LEGACY

For these families, a hotel is not measured in new construction or expanded infrastructure, but in the lives that continue to unfold beneath its roof BY KATHERINE BARRY VERANO



Richard (left), Richie and Maureen Lupinacci, lovingly remembered in the framed photo, at The Hermitage Nevis

"It's survival is not just architectural marvel; it's the heart of a generational story"

## THE HERMITAGE NEVIS

Tucked into the hills of Nevis stands a wooden house whose story stretches back more than three centuries. Built around 1670 by the Pembertons, one of Nevis' first settling families, The Hermitage is believed to be the island's oldest wooden house and one of the oldest in the Caribbean. Its survival is not just architectural marvel; it's the heart of a generational story spanning from early colonial planters to modern day hoteliers.

As generations passed, The Hermitage shifted from a working planter's home to a retirement home for the Pembertons. By the mid-20th century, it was no longer a family hub; it sat waiting for someone new to claim it.

Enter the Lupinacci family. Originally from Pennsylvania, Richard and Maureen Lupinacci were living in St. Kitts in 1971 when they found the property through "cocktail party connections and [a] passion for historical discovery," recalls their son and second generation hotelier, Richie Lupinacci.



Richard enjoying a rum punch and a rest



When the Lupinaccis bought The Hermitage, it was first and foremost a restoration project as the property was nearly lost to the jungle

This was first and foremost a restoration project; the Great House was nearly lost to the jungle. "The garden was overgrown, there was grass growing through the floor, and daylight coming through the ceiling," says Richie.

Soon after purchasing, the family moved to Barbados, where Richie was born, and then to the U.S. They visited Nevis periodically, working on the house and maintaining their island connection. In 1979, they made Nevis their full-time home, and The Hermitage was once again the center of a young family's life. As Richie and his three older sisters grew, so did the property. What began as a home soon became a bed and breakfast and eventually a hotel.

Like many island children, Richie's path eventually took him away. "I went to boarding school when I was 13," he recalls. "I was 23 when I returned to help my parents for what I thought would be a season." That "season" became a lifetime as Richie, realizing he preferred life on Nevis, stepped into a central role in management and day-to-day operations.

Maintaining a wooden house built around 1670 is no easy task, and the Lupinaccis vision is grounded in preservation, not reinvention. "We are only the third family to have owned it in 300 years," Richie says of the property. "We plan to keep its authenticity." www.hermitagenevis.com






The original Royal St. Kitts Casino

## ROYAL ST. KITTS

Archie Zuliani's journey from WWII Italy to St. Kitts "Pioneer of Tourism" is a unique one that began when he emigrated from Italy to Canada at age 13. He arrived in Toronto with his mother and not much else. "He started at the bottom – washing dishes, setting bowling pins – before moving into construction," says John Zuliani, Archie's son and President of Royal St. Kitts. "He discovered he had a talent for it!" And with that talent, Archie was soon a successful developer with projects throughout the Toronto area.

By his early forties, after decades of working and living hard, Archie's health began to fail him. His dentist and friend, Dr. Keith Blake of St. Kitts, urged him to "visit his island and slow down." In 1982, Archie did just that, intending to retire and play golf daily, but after three months was "so bored that he joked he was ready to buy the San Francisco bridge," John recalls.

In the early 1980s, the government was preparing for Independence (which came in September 1983) and pivoting from sugar to tourism. They owned a frustratingly unsuccessful hotel in then-undeveloped Frigate Bay. Archie bought the hotel in 1982, and soon after, an electrical fire burned the entire structure to the ground.

To honor his deal, Archie had to rebuild before Independence. "Luckily, that was his area of expertise," says John. "And nearly everyone – more than a thousand workers - helped." There were no cement trucks on-island back then, so the workers broke gravel by hand, sending it up bucket by bucket. Only, the concrete dried before it got to the top. "Dad hired a band to motivate everyone!" laughs John. "He said he never saw the buckets move so fast as when the band played." That work resulted in the core structure of the Royal St. Kitts Hotel, which still stands today. Archie's role in the birth of a new nation's tourism product didn't stop there.

"The Royal St. Kitts Hotel stands both as a business and a legacy, one that now spans three generations"

Two decades later, he was instrumental in bringing the St. Kitts Marriott Resort, The Federation's largest hotel, to its shores. Prior to taking the helm of Royal St. Kitts, John pursued a very different path: Skydiving. In 2006, he won the World Championships in canopy piloting for Canada, proudly returning with two gold medals. Archie was proud, but pragmatic. "He asked me how much money I made, and how was I going to support my family," John says. "So, I quit skydiving that day and moved back to St. Kitts." That move was driven both by necessity, as Archie's health was deteriorating, and by a desire to build something lasting.

And build he has. Under John's leadership, the hotel underwent a $30 million USD comprehensive renovation and transformation. The company has also developed new projects, such as the Royal Plaza commercial complex, and has plans for future expansion. Through it all, the Royal St. Kitts remains a family-run operation. Archie's two nieces are integral to the business: one serves as in-house counsel; the other's husband is the hotel's general manager. This family network provides John with trusted support as he has leads the company into the future.

The Royal St. Kitts Hotel stands both as a business and a legacy, one that now spans three generations. John's son Archie (named in honor of his father) and daughter Alana keep the family's "AZ" initials – and spirit – intact, alive and well. www.royalstkittshotel.com ■

From laid-back luxury to charming cottage style, you'll find just what your heart desires when booking accomodations in St. Kitts and Nevis.



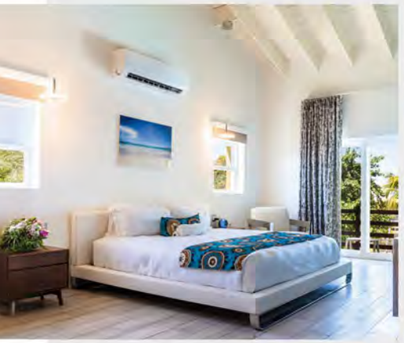

John and his son Archie in Frigate Bay at the government-dedicated roundabout memorial that honors his father, the late Archie Zuliani



Archie Zuliani, Pioneer of Tourism

Lupinacci and Zuliani photos © Tina Papies. Historic photos courtesy of The Hermitage and Royal St. Kitts archives

# Royal St Kitts Hotel





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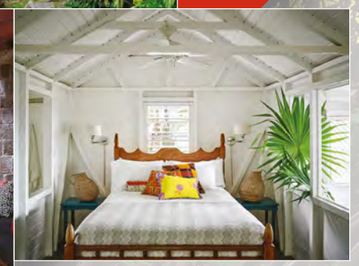
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Click to read our extended interview with Shelley.

"I DON'T HAVE TO SELL the island because I love it!" broker and owner of Island Life Properties Shelley Buffett tells me with a warm smile. "I go anywhere in St. Kitts and people know me. I grew up in a small Canadian town, so it's like coming back to my roots," she continues.

Shelley traded Nova Scotia's rugged, lighthouse studded coastline for the Caribbean's palm-kissed shores 22 years ago, making a major career pivot – albeit an accidental one – in the process.

"People often assume that real estate is a sales job, but I see myself more as an advisor. I'm passionate about putting my [16-year] caring profession and love of houses together," she says of her job, which Shelley admits she "kind of fell into" after a brief stint in hospitality when first settling in St. Kitts.

With a background in psychology and sociology, Shelley spent the early part of her career helping ex-offenders make the transition to life outside of prison and working in Halifax's Children's Hospital.

Her altruistic nature isn't just reserved for people. "I feed a million animals," she says, adding "there's always pet food in the back of my car!" Shelley rescued her one-eyed coconut terrier Daisy six years ago in downtown Basseterre. "For dog lovers, it's the place to be," she says of St. Kitts, which is home to a non-profit animal rescue center (BARC) and an international veterinary medicine school (RUSVM).

A longtime resident of Frigate Bay, Shelley enjoys dining out at local haunts like Marshall's and The Sommelier's and baking sourdough on Sundays. With no plans to slow down anytime soon, the 65-year-old tells me, "A lot of my friends are retired, but I'd go out of my mind!" www.ilprealestate.com ■

*"People often assume that real estate is a sales job, but I see myself more as an advisor"*

Shelley backdropped by one of the island's most iconic views at Sundance Ridge

# SHELLEY BUFFETT

## the "ALTRUISTIC BROKER"

WORDS BY SARAH FREEMAN, PHOTOGRAPHY BY TINA PAPIES



"I'm inspired by life in general, but the Caribbean plays a key role," says Barbados-born Dianne Brisbane

# A Life by DESIGN

Dianne Brisbane, Principal of St. Kitts-based Dianne Angela Design, showed a passion for art and design from a very young age. When she turned 13, her father gave her a Singer sewing machine (that she still owns!) and carte blanche to design the interiors of their home. She repainted walls, made new draperies and throw pillows and even used patterned paint for accent walls. "My parents had no choice but to love it," she recalls with a laugh.

Guided by her father's wisdom and a Singer sewing machine, Dianne Brisbane channeled her childhood passion into a successful design career, says *Katherine Barry Verano*

## BE SURE OF THE TALENT

It didn't take long to recognize art was her calling. Throughout school, Dianne was deeply involved in – and excelled at – creative arts. She later attended the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto, where she specialized in textiles within the design department. "My father would always say to me: If you want to do this, you must be sure of the talent!," she recalls. "I was confident I had it. I always knew this was my direction."

After graduation, Dianne returned to Barbados to teach art, yet design remained top-of-mind. "I always wanted to do my own thing and create textiles," she says. And create she did. Dianne started her own studio, which soon evolved into a storefront selling fashion and home accessories, such as throw pillows crafted from her hand-designed textiles. Her studio soon grew into five boutiques across Barbados, and Dianne personally curated a collective environment of Caribbean artists and designers. "No man is an island," she notes. "I wanted to identify with the bigger [Caribbean] picture, so I went to different islands to find artists and designers who were creating unique things."

Not only did design lead her to other islands, it led her to love and to eventually calling St. Kitts home. One of the artists Dianne met along her design journey was St. Kitts milliner and creative force Dale Kelley. "Dale and I went to the first-ever design expo in Antigua, and that's where I met my husband Max [a native Kittitian], who was living there at the time," recalls Dianne. The rest, as they say, is history!

## A LIFE INSPIRED

"I'm inspired by life in general, but the Caribbean plays a key role," notes Dianne. "When I travel, I want to experience a place's essence, its culture, its heritage, so I like to reflect that in my work." Dianne encourages her clients to use local cultural influences, art and materials when possible. "Everyone has their own style and preference, and you have to honor that, be flexible and bring in [the influences] in ways that suit their vision."

**"Throughout school, Dianne was deeply involved in – and excelled at – creative arts"**

In a recent project, Dianne created a 20-foot feature wall with custom baskets handmade by Dominican Caribs and incorporated furniture that nods to woven traditions and craftsmanship, such as a woven-backed chair. She likes to incorporate black and white photography to bring contrast and narrative to a space and particularly likes renowned Barbadian photographer Ronnie Carrington, whose striking images capture Old Caribbean character, culture and people. Dianne is also a staunch advocate of incorporating local natural resources when possible, such as volcanic stone exteriors. "The region is rich with talent, if you know where to look," she notes, citing Indigo Egret in Nevis as a good example of a lifestyle shop with interesting local fabrics, art and other home décor.

## A TALENTED TEAM

Dianne believes core design principles are transferable across disciplines, and that even without formal training in every area, one can harness needed skills through a team. "I have a talented interior design team," says Dianne, "and I am the creative director, so to speak." Always balancing the client's vision with her own guidance, Dianne and team have completed everything from full scale, ground-up projects to large villas and small condos. They've even tackled commercial projects such as an airport lounge and the Indian Summer restaurant in St. Kitts.

## BRINGING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

In all her projects, Dianne takes it back to her roots with a firm belief in self-education and determination that came from her father, a self-taught engineer. "My father has always been my greatest inspiration," muses Dianne. "He built his own award-winning airplane, which now sits alongside the British Airways Concorde at Grantley Adams International Airport in Barbados. I would squeeze into the tail to hold tools while he riveted from the outside." During a recent large-scale project, she recalled his advice, which gave her strength to persevere: Plant the vision; Work out the logistics. Sound guidance for design and life! ■

Photos © Tina Paples



Dianne encourages her clients to use local cultural influences, art and materials



Bajan photographer Ronnie Carrington's images capture Old Caribbean character





Tropical florals, warm wood tones and local art bring warmth and personality to this space

### CURATING YOUR OWN COLLECTION

**In St. Kitts:** Browse local artists and artisans curated by Dale Kelley at her new **Flamboyant Art Collective shop (www.flamboyantartcollective.org)**, which opens this year at the Park Hyatt Christophe Harbour.
**In Nevis:** Charlestown's **Indigo Egret (@theindigoegret)** at Riviere House is a must for local artist Kate Spencer's work, local and regionally made interior accents and more, while a visit to **Juliansdóttir (@Juliansdottir01)** in the Nevis Artisan Village is an experience in and of itself. Owner and artist Nicole Rogers creates wearable silk art using ancient water marbling.

For a design consultation, contact Dianne at +1 (869) 662-3454 or dianne@dianneangeladesign.com



Soft textiles, dark wood, blue accents and a vaulted, open-truss ceiling imparts a West Indian sensibility



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# Building your DREAM

Special Contributor *Patricia Elliott* shares with *Your St. Kitts & Nevis* what it takes to turn a long-held vision into a home by the sea

Before you decide to build your dream house on a Caribbean island, ask yourself a few honest questions: Do you have the time, energy, patience and perseverance to see it through? And perhaps more importantly, does it feel right – not just once, but every time you imagine the life waiting for you there?

## 1 FIND A PLACE THAT FEELS LIKE HOME

The first step is finding the right piece of property. Not just a beautiful view or a promising listing. Spend time in the neighborhood. Listen to it. Watch how it moves. Notice the activity, the pace, the sounds and the light. Can you see yourself waking up there every morning? Does it give you that instant sense of possibility? If the answer is yes, the first hurdle may not feel like a hurdle at all.

I had traveled to more than 28 islands, but never to Nevis. I fell in love with the island for the first time in 2015. In 2017, I was referred to a local real estate company and set out to find "the spot" to build my dream home. We drove to an available lot in Clifton Estate, one with the right elevation and great views of the sea and Nevis Peak. The minute I stepped onto the property, I knew this was the one. It was like it was meant to be!

## 2 DESIGN YOUR DREAM

The next essential decision is choosing the right architect. This is where the dream begins to take shape, and it's worth taking the time to get the design right. Know what you want. Long before mood boards became digital, I was collecting rooms, textures, materials, colors and ideas that spoke to the house I hoped to build one day.

For me, this dream was more than 25 years in the making. It began with a scrapbook – the kind where you cut images out of magazines and paste them into an oversized book. I was referred to architect Anne Hersh, who had designed many homes on Nevis. When I presented my scrapbook to her, she was both surprised and impressed. The ideas had evolved over the years, but they were rooted in a clear foundation. I was precise about how I wanted the house to feel, not just how I wanted it to look.

"The minute I stepped onto the property, I knew this was the one. It was like it was meant to be!"

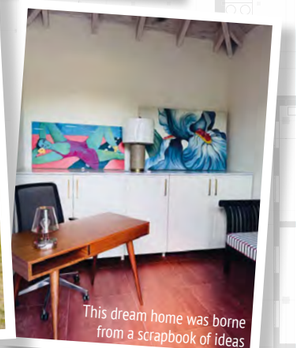




"It became something far greater than a construction project. It became the life I imagined, built from the ground up"


Design was extremely important in this project


Dramatic views of Nevis Peak drove Patricia's lot choice


This dream home was borne from a scrapbook of ideas

## 3 CHOOSE THE RIGHT TEAM

The early connection with a contractor matters. You are not simply hiring someone to build walls and pour concrete; you are choosing a partner for a long, complicated and deeply personal journey. When it is right, you will know.

I met with several contractors on Nevis, looked at their work and interviewed prior clients. By then, my scrapbook had evolved into a three-ring binder, organized by room and category. I knew what I wanted, and I made sure to keep the conversation open, direct and detailed. Clear communication with your contractor is essential.

When builder Urban Jones saw my scrap book, he knew I had a clear vision. Building a house and doing it on your own, you form friendships. Urban and I were in constant contact. The local labor, including woodworker Clifford Parry, had all the ins and outs about what I needed for the project on Nevis.

## 4 LEARN THE ISLAND'S RHYTHM

Building in a foreign country means learning new rules, systems and timelines. Things don't always work the way they do back home, and time moves differently in the Caribbean. It is important to be highly involved. Many people hire a project manager. The more you immerse yourself in the process and get to know the key players in your new environment, the better equipped you are to bring your final home to life.

A short list of obstacles on-island can include electricity and water outages, the planning department, customs delays, even the rainy season. Timelines will shift. Deliveries will be late. Some days, no one may show up on site. These are not minor details; they become central to the success of your project. And once the house is finished, many of these same systems remain part of daily island life. Learn to trust the process, even when it stretches your patience.

## 5 WATCH THE DREAM UNFOLD

People often say that building your own house is one of the most stressful projects you can take on. But in my experience, the highs far outweigh the lows. The most important thing is to remember that it is a collaboration, and when everyone understands the goal, the process becomes less about control and more about shared momentum.

When people ask whether I created my dream home, I know many would answer by listing the things they would do differently. I would not change a thing. The final execution matched exactly what I had envisioned. Why? Because I was present. I gave it 300 percent of my time, stayed deeply involved and made friends along the way. It became something far greater than a construction project. It became the life I imagined, built from the ground up. ■

Main background image: Shutterstock.com; Inset photos: courtesy of Patricia Elliott

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Living on St. Kitts and commuting to Nevis – cutting through the waves of The Narrows – is never boring for this dual-island family

BY SUZANNE GORDON

# Twice as NICE

The Joseph Rowe family made the move from Nevis to St. Kitts and find themselves enjoying the many benefits of a twin-island lifestyle





Lawyer Dahlia Joseph Rowe admits that she and her family have the best of both worlds. Although they both still work much of the time on Nevis, Dahlia and her husband Sam decided to make the jump over to St. Kitts, a move that was spurred by a change of school for their children.

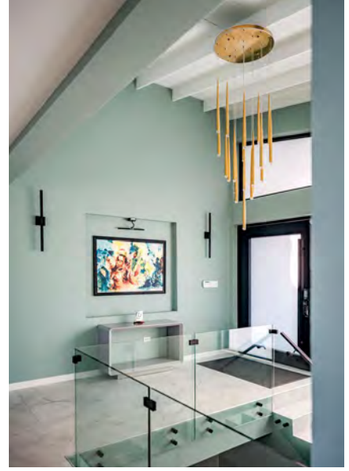
Enrolling their two kids at SKI Academy on St. Kitts was the key motivator, but moving to the Federation's larger island has opened up so many different opportunities for all of them. They knew that many Nevis-based children take the ferry to school in St. Kitts every day, but that takes time, effort and a good bit of coordination. "We didn't want that for our family, so we moved," says Dahlia. "The children can do after school activities and participate fully."

Now, rather than the kids commuting to school, it's mom who skims to work across The Narrows three days a week via a six-minute water taxi ride. She spends the rest of the time in her office on St. Kitts. Dad also commutes to his job in property management on Nevis – only he commutes on alternate days. That way, there's always one parent on St. Kitts to manage the kids' schooling and carpooling to their myriad after-school activities. "It's easy to do. The water taxi has made it that much easier," says Sam. "We keep a car parked over there, and in just six minutes we're on Nevis."

Dahlia stresses that while the two islands are so different, each has so much to offer. "I always felt St. Kitts and Nevis offer the best of both worlds. By moving between the islands, you can almost feel like you are taking a vacation – they are so different." Even the activities available to the kids are different. On Nevis, the whole family participated in the swimming program at the Nevis Aquatic and Sailing Center. Now on St. Kitts, both Skyler (12) and Jamie (8) have gravitated more towards the active tennis program there. "Nevis has a strong swim program, and we miss that," she notes, adding, "but other things make up for that loss. And Skyler can enjoy the LEAP dance programs that are available on both islands."

In investigating real estate on St. Kitts, it was difficult to find a standalone house to rent with a fenced yard for their dog, so the couple decided that it was better to build to get exactly what they wanted. And, for them, it turned out to be a joyous experience. They chose a small lot in Frigate Bay and built a 4-bedroom home with an office, gym, pool and wonderful views of the Atlantic.

"When we looked at the real estate market, we felt it was better to build.



**"Moving to the Federation's larger island has opened up so many different opportunities"**

Frigate Bay was more expensive, and the properties we looked at were a bit dated," she said.

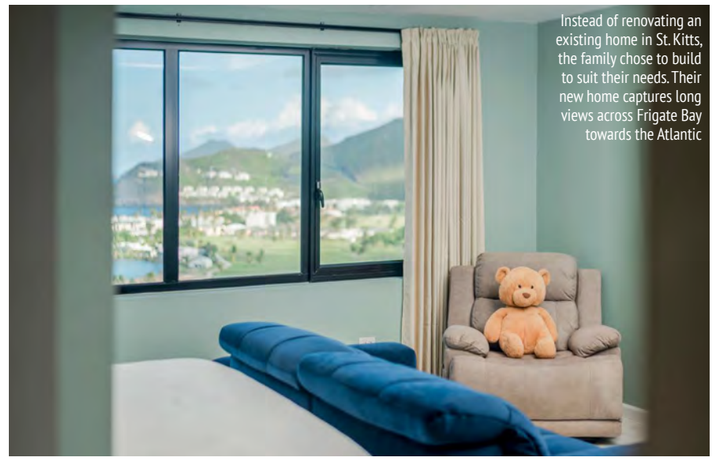
Both Dahlia and Sam landed in Nevis from other Caribbean islands and then met in the Federation. Dahlia, who grew up in Grenada, graduated from University of the West Indies at Cave Hill and Hugh Wooding Law School in Trinidad and received a commercial law master's degree at the University of London. She got her first job on Nevis. Sam came from Jamaica and now works in property management. He received both undergraduate and graduate degrees in management at the University of the West Indies.

Their active lifestyle has made it easy to get to know people in the community. "In terms of actually living in St. Kitts, with the kids you have activities and meet people



that way," she said. Plus, she's joined the Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce and is active in the bar association.

Their lives are chock-full and it's hard to imagine how they manage it all. "You have to carve out the time. There's more time than you think," Dahlia says. "There's more stuff to do on St. Kitts to keep the kids occupied longer," Sam adds. "There's sports, cinema and pizza delivery any time of night! Happy kids, happy parents... We have adapted nicely!" ■



Instead of renovating an existing home in St. Kitts, the family chose to build to suit their needs. Their new home captures long views across Frigate Bay towards the Atlantic

Photos © Tina Papies

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"MY FATHER GREW UP POOR. He knew what it was to be hungry and underprivileged," Chairman of Amory Enterprises Ernest Amory MBE tells me. "He started with just five pounds of flour," which laid the foundation for a flourishing family bakery business – now a household name – with three storefronts on St. Kitts and a soon-to-be opened one on Nevis. "My dad told me not to worry about making money… just provide the best service and quality and the money will come," he continues. Ernest and his son Charlie (CEO of Amory Enterprises) continue to live by Edward Ashton Amory's entrepreneurial ethos, putting customer loyalty front and center. Ernest fondly remembers one of Amory Bakery's longest serving patrons: 98-year old Mr. Buchanan who "had come everyday on his [60 year old!] bicycle to buy bread since 1949."

Shaped by their international upbringings, the father-son partnership is proof that honoring tradition while embracing the future – from kitchen technology to a wellness smoothie menu – can be a winning formula in business. While Ernest was schooled in Toronto, Charles spent his formative years in Switzerland studying Business and Hospitality Management in Zurich. But it was Edward Ashton's grandson's family European vacations – during which he swapped sightseeing for long lunches – that cemented Charles' culinary education.

"When tourists visit an island they don't want a cheeseburger, they want local cuisine," he says, adding, "I rarely see cassava – a Kittitian-grown crop – on menus here." At The View, Amory Enterprises Palms Court Gardens destination restaurant, it's a mainstay ingredient in their signature Tamarind-Glazed Chicken dish.

"I'm confident that Charles will take this business to the next generation," Ernest says, citing "being human and knowing the importance of giving back" as two core values of their business. Carrying on Edward Ashton Amory's philanthropy, Ernest shares that the bakery "gave thousands [61to be exact] of loaves away during the pandemic" and often marks milestones with community giveaways, from free meals to BOGO pastries. www.amory.ecarib5.com

*"When tourists visit an island they don't want a cheeseburger, they want local cuisine"*

Click to read our extended interview with the Amory's.



# ERNEST & CHARLES AMORY

## the "FAMILY FOODPRENEURS"

Ernest (left) and his son Charles take a rare breather in front of Palms Court Garden's Mediterranean-esque pool

WORDS BY SARAH FREEMAN, PHOTOGRAPHY BY TINA PAPIES

# The Provenance & PEOPLE Behind the Plate

Behind every dish there's a farmer, fisherman, hobbyist herb-grower or even a green-fingered chef! Get to know the islanders and homegrown produce making St. Kitts even more delectable, says *Sarah Freeman*



Marshall's (straight-from-the-tree and sea) Ackee and Saltfish appetizer

## A CARIBBEAN MATCHMAKER

Frigate Bay's upmarket Marshall's restaurant has given Ackee and Saltfish – traditionally eaten as breakfast or brunch in Jamaica – the all-frills, fine dining treatment. Served as an appetizer with tostones (fried green plantain), saltfish and sautéed with onions and peppers, the quintessentially Caribbean dish's star ingredient is ruby red ackee, which hang like Christmas decorations from trees dotted around the premises.

The pear-shaped national fruit of Jamaica, which is Chef Verral Marshall's motherland, has two distinct short seasons and marks its maturity by bursting open to reveal pearl-like (but toxic!) black seeds. **www.marshallsdiningskn.com**



Denise (left) and her daughter Trellor tending to their backyard herbs

*"A vision in fifty shades of glorious green, it's a standout from their dinner service"*



17°62° Gibraltar Gastrolounge's Herb-Crusted Poached Wahoo main

## FAMILY GROWTH

A lab technician at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine by day and hobbyist herb harvester come the weekend, Trellor Fraites has joined forces with her farming mother Denise Gillard to create a budding backyard business.

The duo grow rosemary, thyme and chives at their family home in Newton Ground in the island's far north. Their herbs take centerstage in 17°62° Gibraltar Gastrolounge's Herb-Crusted Poached Wahoo main, topped with a herb salsa verde, balsamic glaze and herb oil with parsley potato. A vision in fifty shades of glorious green, the dish is a standout from the Brimstone Hill-based restaurant's dinner service. **www.1762gibraltar.com**





Spice Mill's Roger Brisbane and Fisherman Curtis Duncan talk fishy business at Old Road Pier



Spice Mill Restaurant's Grilled Catch of the Day

## IT'S A SHORE THING

The Southeast Peninsula's long-established Spice Mill Restaurant ticks lots of boxes, but it's perhaps the simple pleasure of devouring seafood just steps from the sparkling Caribbean Sea that lingers longest in the memory.

Their perennially popular Grilled Catch of the Day, served with coconut rice, seasonal vegetables, lemon beurre blanc and cilantro is, well, precisely that. Hands-on owner Roger Brisbane regularly rendezvous with local fishermen like Curtis Duncan at Old Road pier to inspect and collect fresh-out-of-the-water fish like mahi mahi and wahoo. **www.spicemillrestaurant.com**



Judah clasps the edible parts of the remarkable moringa tree

## SUPERFOOD SENSATION

Judah Fari's 100% vegan restaurant, Ital Creations, is the very definition of zero-kilometer and zero-waste dining.

Situated just off the F.T Williams Highway on the outskirts of Basseterre, its onsite organic farm is fecund with tropical fruit and vegetables like okra, sweet potato, papaya and mangoes. Among the heavily laden fruit trees, you'll find the medicinal moringa, of which almost all parts – from its pods to the white blossom flowers – are edible.

A nutritional powerhouse, moringa leaves are the not-so-secret-ingredient in their quinoa and moringa lunch and moreish moringa green smoothie, both of which are lovingly prepared by the Ital chef and owner Judah. **+1 (869) 664-0994**



Ital Creations' quinoa and moringa lunch



Otis Jeffers proudly holds one of his prized pumpkins, which can weigh up to 65 lbs



Carambola Beach Club's butter-poached Caribbean Spiny Lobster

*"Six miles south on sheltered South Friar's Bay, diners can taste the fruits of Otis' labor at Carambola Beach Club"*

## FAIRYTALE OF ST. KITTS

Backdropped by Atlantic Ocean views, Otis Jeffers' nine-acre farm's prized crop is the pumpkin: all 350 of them! He cultivates three different varieties: nutty-tasting calabaza, pale-tan colored Long Island cheese and fairytale, which looks just like a miniature Cinderella's carriage!

Six miles south on sheltered South Friar's Bay, diners can taste the fruits of Otis' labor at Carambola Beach Club, which delivers beachfront dining par excellence. Order the locally fished butter-poached Caribbean Spiny Lobster with seared scallops and grilled shrimp, served with roasted pumpkin fondant. And let's not forget the sides of golden sands and calm waters! **www.carambolabeachclub.com**



Dave shucks a conch on Conquering Lion, which is filled with the morning's haul

## A GREAT SHELL LIFE

Native to Caribbean coasts, conch (pronounced "konk") is a must-try marine mollusk. One of several Kittitian conch fishers, Dave hand-harvests the striking spiraled seashells year-round from his trusty boat *Conquering Lion*, or should that be Conch-uering Lion!

He supplies a handful of restaurants across the island, including Serendipity – located west of the capital – where you can savor tender and delicately sweet conch with harbor views. It features heavily on their sea-centric à la carte lunch and dinner menus, making its way into fritters and chowder. Conch is also the headline ingredient in one of their main entrées and comes smothered in a light garlic and parsley sauce with sweet peppers and onions. **www.serendipitystkitts.net**



Serendipity's Conch Entrée

## TINY BUT MIGHTY

Electric green trays of pea shoots, sunflower sprouts and mixed salad fill the breezeway of Fred Kaesmacher's Half Moon Bay home, where he's nurtured his Sun Kissed Microgreens business since 2017.

Fred supplies packaged microgreens to local grocery stores, and live trays – like amaranth – to several restaurants, including St. Kitts Marriott Beach Resort. Not just an eye-catching garnish, these flavor-boosting greens are "an integral part of a recipe process, used like you would a spice or seasoning," says St. Kitts Marriott Beach Resort's Executive Chef Christophe Letard, adding "In my mind, they should not only be used to enhance presentation as they are too often used as an afterthought to finish a dish." You can try Fred's neon-pink stemmed amaranth in the resort's FIRE Steak and Seafood Restaurant, where it features in their Seared Scallops dish served with cauliflower puree, cumin air and caper raisin relish. **www.marriott.com** ■



Dazzling, three-inch tall amaranth is so delicate, that it's cut live to use



Palms Court Gardens' Caprese Tower Starter

## SOIL FOOD

Palms Court Gardens' culinary concept might be Mediterranean-inspired, but their restaurant's ingredients speak to St. Kitts bountiful larder – from Nevisian greens to sweet-sour tamarind.

Ornamented with parmesan chips and sweetened with mango coulis, their sculptural Caprese Tower starter is almost too pretty to eat. The View Restaurant's stacked salad features island-picked, dark-fleshed tomatoes and a pesto sauce made from aromatic basil that's grown onsite and also garnishes several of their craft cocktails. **www.palmscourtgardens.com**

All photos © Tina Papies

*"Electric green trays of pea shoots, sunflower sprouts and mixed salad fill the breezeway of Fred Kaesmacher's home"*



Fred flaunts his breeze-way-grown trays of microgreen goodness




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# Pours for THOUGHT



Sunset Reef's Caribbean Glow (pictured right)

From the maverick mixologists making mocktails memorable to a rainforest bar reaching beyond the rum punch line, St. Kitts is disrupting the Caribbean cocktail cliché, says *Sarah Freeman*



Soho Lounge's Cucumber Cooler



Palms Court Gardens Blueberry Ginger Mojito



Aidan flexes his mixologist skills at Spice Mill Restaurant's rooftop bar



Arthur's Passion Fruit Martini (pictured right)



Alfees Bar's Road to Nowhere Punch

## Elevated Sundowners

SUNSET REEF

St. Kitts isn't exactly lacking in venues to savor a sundowner, but Sunset Reef has the edge; literally and figuratively. Perched on a cliff overlooking Palmetto Point, this exclusive suite-only resort's centerpiece is its infinity pool, which artfully reflects the changing sunset hues.

The cocktail menu may be diminutive, but it packs a big flavor punch. Enjoy elevated European sips like Negroni Sbagliato or the Kittitian-inspired Sugar City Mojito in the water, by the water or partially submerged and stretched out on the pool's stylish sun shelfs.

**Star Cocktail:** A tribute to the island's bounty of tropical fruits, their unique-tasting Caribbean Glow teases with tamarind, pineapple and passionfruit.

"The cocktail menu may be diminutive, but it packs a big flavor punch"

**Top Tip:** Can't resist the lure of the sea? Amble down to the resort's castaway-styled Sandbar, which plants you in spritzing distance of the shoreline.

www.sunsetreefstkitts.com

## Sultry Sips SOHO LOUNGE

Chic yet unstuffy, this Frigate Bay favorite wouldn't look out of place in London or NYC's Soho neighborhoods. Bringing some pizazz to the cocktail making and shaking is Pravin, a true showman – and a skilled one at that. He whips up playfully named drinks like Plum Beach and Lick Me Up with infectious enthusiasm and a killer smile.

**Star Mocktail:** Simple yet stylistic, their Cucumber Cooler is a spa-like mocktail that more than lives up to its moniker.

**Top Tip:** Soho Lounge's Bar Bites menu is too tempting to pass up, even if you have dinner plans! Graze bar-side on shrimp croquettes, saucy wings and sticky meatballs … and watch the mixology magic unfold.

www.soholoungestkitts.com

## Masterful Mocktails

PALMS COURT GARDENS

Blending Basseterre harbor views with bold, ingredient-forward fare, Palms Court Gardens also serves up an extensive cocktail menu spanning local favorites to classics. Flying the flag for St. Kitts and Nevis' purveyors and produce, their poolside Bellini Bar favors island-crafted rums from the likes of Belmont and Clifton Estates and fresh pineapple only for their silky, smooth Piña Colada.

**Star Mocktail:** It's a close call between Cool Runnings (with extra points for the popsicle stirrer!) and their herbaceous Blueberry Ginger Mojito, which tastes like summer in a glass.

**Top Tip:** You can chill for a bit and have a dip in the pool with their Private Shaded Cabana Day Pass ($200 USD) with poolside perks like towel service, a 10% discount on food and drinks and choice of beer bucket, House Rosé or Astoria Prosecco plus phone charging service.

www.palmscourtgardens.com

## Rooftop Alchemy

SPICE MILL RESTAURANT

At Spice Mill's namesake rooftop bar, you can drink in views of Nevis' shapeshifting peak and imbibe in artisanal pours like their tropical Tiki-inspired Hi Tai. The cocktail's concept may be Polynesian, but its spirit is wholeheartedly hyperlocal. Restaurant owner and craft spirit connoisseur Roger Brisbane's line of HiBiscus Spirits – which includes rum, tequila and gin – are made from island-grown Roselle hibiscus and created at their onsite micro-distillery.

**Star Cocktail:** An ode to Italy with a spicy Kittitian twist, their Bitter & Bliss is a heady concoction of Campari, Vermouth Ambrato and house-made gin.

**Top Tip:** Ask Aidan to whip you up a custom creation with your favorite local ingredients. The burgeoning bar chef recently returned to the motherland after cutting his teeth in Barcelona: a city reputed for its garlanded mixologists and world-class cocktail haunts.

www.spicemillrestaurant.com

"Wingfield's rainforest-wrapped Alfees is a feast for all the senses"

## Rum-inspired Rainforest Pours

ALFEES BAR

A relative newbie on the St. Kitts bar scene, Wingfield's rainforest-wrapped Alfees, named for the former sugar estate's 18th-century head distiller, is a feast for all the senses.

Take a pew overlooking 400-year-old rum-making relics as birdsong rings out and mixologist Kevis Major prepares some palette-pleasing pours. Blended and bottled onsite, Wingfield's award-winning Old Road Rum is the headline spirit for Alfees Bar's impressively long list of signature cocktails like the Rum Mule, which is chilled to perfection in a copper cup.

**Star Cocktail:** The recipe may be secret, but there's nothing subtle about their Road to Nowhere Punch, which is served in a crystal-cut pineapple glass.

**Top Tip:** Cap your cocktails with an hour-long rum tasting and tour ($75 USD per person) with Old Road Rum's charismatic co-founder Jack Widdowson.

www.oldroadrum.com

## Lunchtime Libations ARTHUR'S

Fanned by the Atlantic breeze, open-sided Arthur's Restaurant and Beach Club is primed for a languorous lunch of sea-to-fork fare paired with some refreshingly fruity cocktails like Wild Berry Caipiroska and Mango Tango. Customers can also expect a front row seat to pelicans diving for their own dinner over Dieppe Bay's sweeping black volcanic sand beach.

**Star Cocktail:** Their Passion Fruit Martini flawlessly balances zest and sweetness making it the perfect midday martini.

**Top Tip:** Bring your swimmers and snorkel for an invigorating post-lunch dip in reef-protected Dieppe Bay, then flop on one of the restaurant's seafront sun loungers.

www.bellemontsanctuaryresort.com ■

All photos © Tina Papies

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# Something's Brewing

From bespoke-blend coffees to superfood-inspired creations, *Sarah Freeman* uncovers the island's greatest caffeine hits



Coconut Grove's Iced Mocha, featuring homemade chocolate. Their other mocha flavors – including vanilla, caramel, pumpkin spice and coconut –are also crafted in-house

"Coffee is made to be enjoyed!" **Coconut Grove's** Julian "Jules" Armstrong tells me as he sips on an americano in his buzzing Frigate Bay café. A pilgrimage for coffee purists, the café has a solid, flavor-first reputation.

The recipe for a good cup of joe, I come to learn, is surprisingly complex, as much a science as it is an art. "Good water quality is important," Julian tells me, explaining that only reverse osmosis H2O goes into Coconut Grove's British-made coffee machine, another essential cog in the coffee-making wheel. "The machine is like being the captain of a ship," he says, while taking the helm of the café's award-winning Fracino and explaining that every single coffee is ground fresh to order.

Not your ordinary beans, Coconut Grove's unique Jungle Blend hails from no less than five different coffee regions, expertly roasted by 100% women-founded and run Carib Bean Coffee near Antigua's English Harbor.

Last but not least, the final ingredient is the barista themselves, who are tasked with putting the "art" in artisan coffee and building that all important rapport with the customer. Trained by Italians – who consider coffee to be central to their national identity – Julian has over three decades of experience under his barista belt. "I've made over a million coffees in my lifetime," he says. **+1 (869) 765-8333**

Community, connection and even ceremony is shaping St. Kitts' coffee revolution, with Frigate Bay evolving into the island's coffee nexus. Read on to discover our two other favorite cafés for escaping the daily grind…

## CROWD-PLEASING CUPS

### Coffee Shop Frigate Bay

With its vast coffee menu, this cavernous café – complete with exposed brick walls, neon signage and tangerine leather chairs – caters for almost every coffee personality and taste. Choose from barista specials like Panna (espresso with cream), booze-addled concoctions like their Bailey's Original or flavored coffees like the Dulce de Leche. There's also an entire sub menu for chai lattes.

Coffee Shop Frigate Bay pulls in a refreshingly diverse crowd, from remote workers and loyal locals to brunching tourists. Get comfy in a sunken booth, bar-style seating or a swinging hammock!

**Best For:** Latte lovers wanting to linger over a lazy breakfast.

**Standout Coffee:** Affogato; really an Italian dessert masquerading as a beverage.

**www.coffeeshopskn.com**

## A MATCH(A) MADE IN HEAVEN

### Amory Bakery

Bringing some European flair to the island is this family-founded bakery chain and all-day café, which opened its Frigate Bay outpost in summer 2025. Coffee classics like Cappuccino and Mocha Latte make for a great pairing with their fresh-from-the-oven pastries like Cherry Danish and Raisin Roll.

Amory's was also the first venue to make matcha a big deal in St. Kitts. Traditionally used in Japanese tea ceremonies, the caffeine-rich green powder is praised for being a powerhouse of antioxidants, making it a satisfyingly healthy coffee alternative. Their dedicated and ever-expanding matcha menu includes imaginative blends like Banana Bread Iced Matcha Latte, alongside options with a fruity Kittitian twist, such as their Passionfruit, Mango and Guava Iced Lattes.

**Best For:** Quality grab-and-go iced-drinks and a distinctly European ambience.

**Standout Coffee:** Their Shakerato: a sweet-iced espresso that's guaranteed to cool you down on a scorching summer's day.**+1 (869) 465-2132** ■

## GET THAT COFFEE HIGH

St. Kitts' only cultivator of coffee, Liamuiga Natural Farm is enveloped by lush rainforest some 1,500 feet above sea level at Phillips Mountain on the island's eastern side. In keeping with their regenerative farming philosophy, the sustainably grown coffee is handpicked and sundried on the farm; its taste reflects the terroir of St. Kitts' rich volcanic soil.




Their beans are scattered far and wide over the island; from its northernmost tip to the Southeast Peninsula. You can try Liamuiga Natural Farm's two signature blends – Rainforest and Vanilla – at Belle Mont Sanctuary Resort and Park Hyatt St. Kitts Christophe Harbour.

Should you want to put a little island flavor in your cup back home, you can pick up their bagged ground and whole beans in light, medium or dark roast at Frigate Bay's Island Roasters Café.
**www.visitlnf.com**

All Photos © Tina Papies apart from Liamuiga Natural Farm (supplied)



Coffee Shop Frigate Bay's Chai Latte and Affogato beverages both hit the (caffeine!) spot

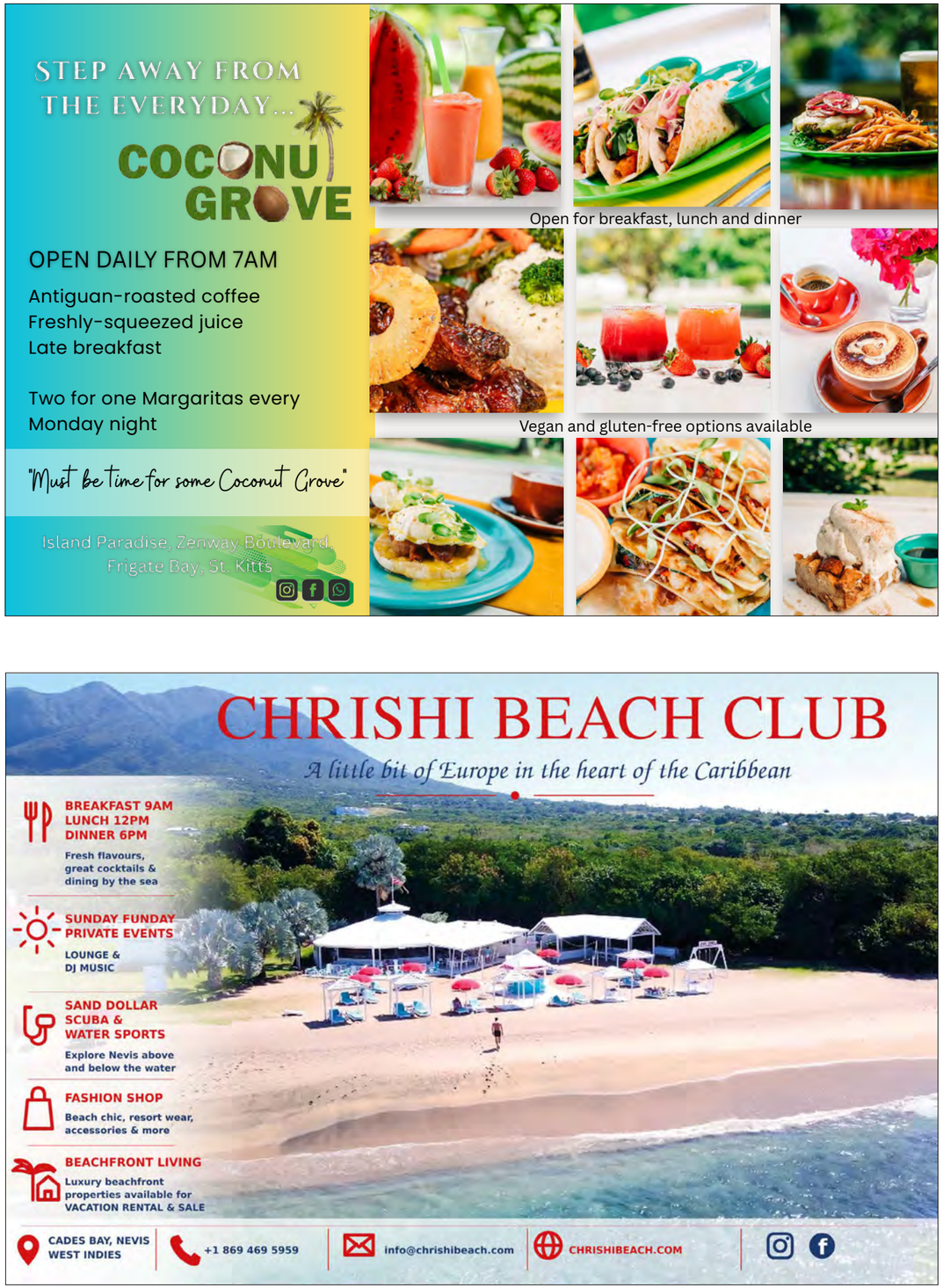



Enjoy a matcha-themed coffee date at Amory Bakery

## A Brew with a View

Nevis is a magnet for nature lovers, golfers, slow travelers and now coffee connoisseurs thanks to the newly-opened **Nevis Coffee Company**. Sandwiched between The Cabanas at Lime and Sunshine's on postcard-pretty Pinneys' Beach, this indoor-outdoor café is the place to savor your daily brew.

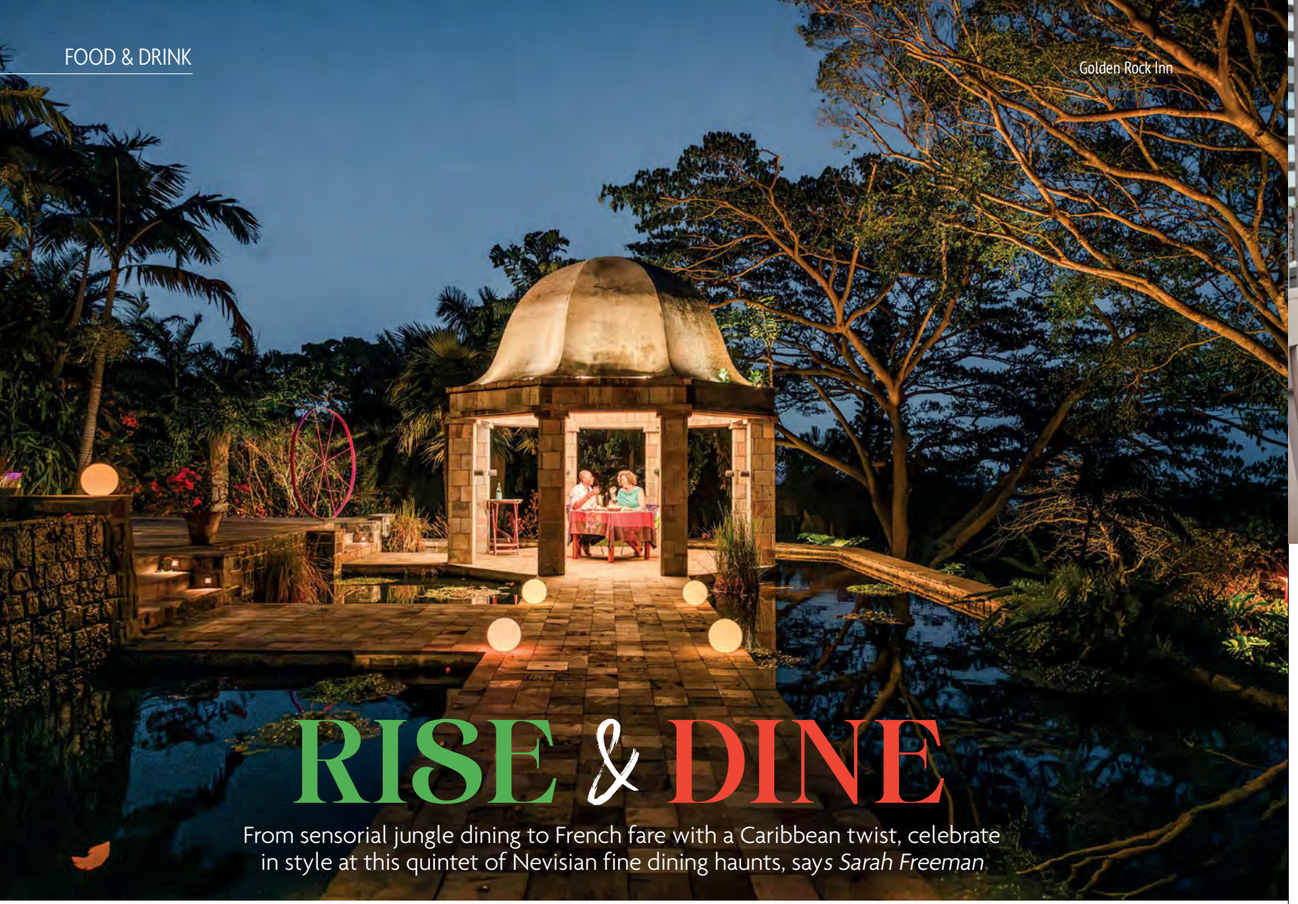
Favorites include the Golden Turmeric Latte and a Decaf Drip Coffee, both served with a generous side of shimmering ocean views.
**www.neviscoffeecompany.com**


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Golden Rock Inn

# RISE & DINE

From sensorial jungle dining to French fare with a Caribbean twist, celebrate in style at this quintet of Nevisian fine dining haunts, say*s Sarah Freeman*

## 1 STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

A longtime local favorite, The Rocks restaurant at Golden Rock Inn really ramps up the romance factor as twilight takes hold. Set amongst illuminated reflective pools and surrounded by the ever-encroaching jungle, its pavilion, which requires advance booking, is the pinnacle of private dining.

As for chef James Eaton's bijoux, yet thoughtfully curated and seasonally led menu, it's refreshingly unpretentious. Standouts include the Arugula and Prosciutto Salad starter doused in a fig-balsamic dressing and owner Helen Marden's Moroccan Chicken recipe paired with the fluffiest couscous. Don't call it a night before letting their rosemary-spiked signature cocktail Mount St. Helena pass your lips.

*"A languorous lunch at L'Escale is sure to transport you to the country that invented 'le restaurant'"*

**Best For:** Alfresco dining under the stars, complete with a jungle soundtrack.
**Good to Know:** Bring layers, as it can get surprisingly chilly come evening time owing to Golden Rock Inn's windward setting on the slopes of Nevis Peak.
**www.goldenrocknevis.com/dining**

## 2 BON APPÉTIT

From its Franco-centric wine list and classic French country-style tablecloths to the sun streaming in through its shuttered windows, a languorous lunch at L'Escale is sure to transport you to the country that invented "le restaurant"!

Diners can take an indulgent bite out of classic starters like Snails in Garlic Parsley Butter mopped up with a golden-bronzed French baguette, or keep things casual with their Tartines, a type of open-faced sandwich. The menu also impresses with French-Caribbean dishes like Accras de Morue (salt fish beignets), which are best paired with a pour from their impressive Old World wine list. Indulge in a sparkling Italian vintage, a Provencal Rosé or white wines from France's famed Alsace region or Loire Valley.
**Best For:** A laid-back yet refined lunch for low-key celebrations.
**Good to Know:** L'Escale throws themed dinner packages ranging from Gourmet Burger Nights to Creole Feasts for special occasions like Father's Day and Valentines.
**www.lescalenevis.com**

## 3 FOR THE HEART AND SOUL

With its characterful 350-year-old Great House, garden-view verandah restaurant and hyperlocal cuisine, The Hermitage Nevis has all the ingredients for a memorable dinner. Tuck into creative starters like the Savory Buckwheat Crêpe with local cured pork, butternut squash and blue cheese before going all out with their signature Lobster Tail main. The surprise star ingredient is its seasonally changing sauce: think coconut-lime and butter cream blended with The Hermitage's onsite-grown herbs.

The menu is masterminded by stalwart chef Krissy Stanley, who's been a firm fixture here for 15 years and counting. Her homemade desserts like Passionfruit Cheesecake and Walnut Pie are the very definition of comfort food par excellence!
**Best For:** Flavors of the old Caribbean – from the homespun fare to its antique-filled interior.
**Good to Know:** If you want a more intimate dinner, avoid Wednesdays (their West Indian Feast) and Fridays (Wood-Fired Pizza night).
**www.hermitagenevis.com/nevis-food**

All photos © Tina Papies


L'Escale


The Hermitage Nevis

## 4 ROMANCING THE STONE

When it comes to one-of-a-kind dining, Montpelier Nevis's original 300-year-old sugar mill steals the crown. With just a dozen covers, its torchlit Mille Privée – complete with starched tablecloths and polished service – is as atmospheric as it is sophisticated.

Putting the five-stars in fine dining is Chef Halva Browne, who turns out starters like Tropical Mahi Mahi Ceviche and artfully plated mains like the Pan-Seared Wahoo Loin. Be sure to leave room for one of their Caribbean-inspired decadent desserts, such as the Spiced Rum-infused Chocolate Cake with Burnt Plantain Ice Cream.

*"Be sure to leave room for one of their Caribbean-inspired decadent desserts"*

**Best For:** Lashings of old-fashioned romance in a unique setting.
**Good to Know:** The mixologists at Montpelier's ocean-view Great House make a mean pre-prandial cocktail, so plan to arrive early. **www.montpeliernevis.com**

## 5 WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Nestled above the Hamilton Estate, Bananas is a sensorial journey from the offset. A torchlit pathway guides diners through foxtail palms; the air is scented with jasmine, and the hum of conversation and cicadas grow ever louder.

Expect to tickle your taste buds with house favorites like the Thai Red Seafood Curry and specials such as the Rack of Lamb. Desserts are deserving of a mention too, with fruity numbers like the Banana Crème Brûlée and Old Road Rum Pineapple Crumble celebrating the tropical treetop restaurant's Caribbean locale.

Easy on the eye, eclectically furnished Bananas is decked out with boldly painted shutters, eye-catching canvases and tropical-motif cushions.
**Best For:** A lively atmosphere and immersion in nature.
**Good to Know:** Reservations are a must, particularly on the first Saturday of the month when live, homegrown music like that of the Honeybees String Band, is also on the menu. **www.bananasnevis.com** ■


Mille Privée


Bananas

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# Sweet Island BITES

Discover a genuine taste of place through these edible expressions, says *Heidi Fagerberg*

PHOTOGRAPHY: TINA PAPIES, ART DIRECTION: SARAH FREEMAN




**1 FRUITY GEMS Guava Cheese**
Dairy-free fruit "cheese" made from guava pulp is dense and chewy with a sweet-tart flavor. A traditional method of fruit preservation, these gems are enjoyed as a sweet treat, softened into a spread or used in baking. Try Flauriel's variations at Di Organics Shoppe. **www.sugartownnaturals.com**

**2 WRAPPED ISLAND FLAVOR Coconut & Raisin Roll**
Coconut and raisin rolls are staples across the islands and commonly found at bakeries and grocery checkouts. Amory Bakery combines the two into one soft, lightly crusted pastry with a sweet coconut and raisin filling. **+1 (869) 465-2132**

**3 COCONUT COMFORT Rock Cake**
Also known as Coconut Drop Cake, these rich, scone-like treats are packed with coconut and make a perfect snack alongside morning tea. Try Fraites & Sons Bakery's version, which is available in supermarket bakeries. **+1 (869) 465-4629**

**4 ISLAND RUM HERITAGE Rum Cake**
This rich cake is rooted in sugarcane and rum-making history. Rum cake, traditionally baked for the holidays, is made with raisins and dried fruits soaked in local rum. Don't miss the Rum Cake debut from the makers of Old Road Rum. **www.oldroadrum.com**

**5 TANGY TREASURES Tamarind Balls**
Made from tamarind rolled in sugar, this sweet-sour treat recalls childhood memories. A favorite for visitors returning home, they're found at grocery checkouts, street vendors and market stalls. Liamigua's variety is widely enjoyed. **+1 (869) 669-3811**

**6 CHILL REFRESHMENT Ice Lollies**
Nothing beats a cold sweet treat on a hot island day. Made with local soursop and mango, these colorful frozen delights are enjoyed across the island. Pick up some Cool Art Pops at Bougainvillea Books & Gifts or special order direct from the makers. **+1 (869) 668-2665** ■



Chrishi Beach Club

# Noshable NEVIS

While exploring the tastier side of Nevis, *Suzanne Gordon* discovers four of the island's peerless pairings



Yachtsman Grill

## 1 Yachtsman Grill
### COLOR SUBLIME

Color is the key to this pairing of Yachtsman Grill's signature Caribbean Pride pizza, topped with a creamy white sauce, lobster, shrimp, grouper, chili flakes, onions and mozzarella, and the complementary Summer Bliss cocktail, a refreshing blend of Grenadine, passion fruit and coconut-flavored rum. "It's colorful," says bartender Winston Didder, as he tops the drink with a slice of orange. "It can go with anything!" Served just steps from the deep blue sea, the pairing is perfect for enjoying the beach party vibe at this popular and lively gathering spot for both locals and visitors. **www.yachtsmangrill.com**

## 2 Chrishi Beach Club
### FRESH AND ELEGANT

A sophisticated, yet effortless pairing is served up at this stylish beachfront restaurant overlooking the Caribbean Sea. The Chrishi Beach Club Tuna Sushi Stack is a colorful contrast to the whitewashed interiors and pairs beautifully with a chilled glass of 2024 Comte Lafond Sancerre. The delicate richness of fresh tuna, creamy avocado, sushi rice and Asian-inspired flavors meets Sancerre's crisp citrus, subtle white fruit and signature mineral freshness. "Its bright acidity cuts beautifully through the richness of the tuna and avocado, while the wine's clean, refreshing finish complements the delicate flavors without overpowering them," says owner Hedda Wienpahl. **www.chrishibeachclub.net**

## 3 Nevis Peak Brewery
### BOLD BREWS

Fresh, ground lamb kabobs with tzatziki sauce and fresh bread is paired with one of Nevis Peak Brewery's popular blends: the 1983 Stout, which commemorates The Federation's independence. Brewery owner Robert Wagner says, "Both are very bold flavors! The lamb is bold, so you need a bold beer to match." In January 2024, the Wagners opened Nevis' first craft brewery at Pinney's Beach, and in May poured their first beer. Since then, they've expanded their brew pub menu to include in-house specialties and new beers, like their Sunrise and Oualie Lagers, Monkey Mango and Pilsner, which are available throughout St. Kitts and Nevis stores and restaurants. **www.nevispeakbrewery.com**




Nevis Peak Brewery



Drift

## 4 Drift
### BOHO BOLTHOLE

At Drift, the Nevis answer to shabby-chic, boho seaside dining, the freshly caught seafood curry partners with a crisp, icy French rosé to provide the perfect ending to an island day. Created by Jamaican chef Kerrian, the colorful curry, a favorite of Drift customers, blends shrimp, locally sourced lobster and mahi,. "We serve a very light rosé – intentionally – because we want the curry to stand on its own," says owner Mark Fuller. A mere 10 feet from the sea, Drift's rustic waterfront vibe, sunset views and watching island-hopper planes land never disappoint. **www.driftnevis.com** ■

Photos © Tina Papies














"TWO TOURS are never the same," Carla Astaphan says of her job as narrator on St. Kitts aptly named Scenic Railway. This fact is largely thanks to Dominican-born Carla's talent for literally changing up the script. Everything from poetry excerpts to local folklore stories and an in-depth knowledge of Kalinago history weave their way into her engaging train commentary, which she's been doing for almost two decades.

The natural-born storyteller – and former contributor to our very own *Visitor* Magazine – is a wearer of many hats, juggling her Sales Associate role at Oualie Realty with making pottery. Many of her signature ceramic motifs, like the *Dancing Sugar Cane* pay tribute to the island, and more specifically – in the case of her sugar mill-shaped incense oil burners – the cinematic train journey itself.

Carla's destiny wasn't written in the stars, rather in the streets. "There was a road called Potters in the neighborhood where I grew up," she says. "As children, we played with miniature clay monkey jars and yabba pots [both Caribbean earthenware vessels] as toys in the yard."

Immersed in arts and culture from a young age, Carla fondly remembers her Shakespeare-reciting mother taking her to plays, and tells me, "We have a lot of creatives in our family: writers, actors, musicians…" She followed suit studying interior design in New York City, during which time she recalls "aggressively bidding" at an auction for a ceramic breakfast set that she still uses to this day. Fast forward four years to 1993 when Carla attended a three-week intensive ceramics course in St. Kitts, cementing her love affair with clay.

When Carla's not throwing pottery on the wheel in her home studio-gallery (where she also teaches ceramic classes), you'll find her catching some rays in Frigate Bay. "I'm a beach bum!" the mad keen swimmer says gleefully. ■

www.carlaastaphan.wixsite.com
www.stkittsscenicrailway.com

# CARLA ASTAPHAN

*the* "STORYTELLING CERAMICIST"




WORDS BY SARAH FREEMAN, PHOTOGRAPHY BY TINA PAPIES



# THE STORY OF THE ST. KITTS RAILWAY

Sugar cane was introduced in St. Kitts in 1643, and it became as valuable as oil is today. Control of the Caribbean sugar islands sent European armies and navies to war, and sugar built empires. By 1775, with 200 estates producing sugar, St. Kitts was the wealthiest of the British possessions. But the introduction of the sugar beet and international market competition drove prices steadily downward.



Believing that profitability could be achieved with economies of scale, in 1912 a group of investors built a modern central sugar factory near Basseterre and began construction of a narrow gauge railway around the island to bring in cane from the outlying estates for processing. Completed in 1926, the railway ran seasonally from February to June for the annual sugar harvest, called "Crop".

The new system allowed sugar production to continue on St. Kitts much longer than on other islands. The island of Nevis stopped growing cane in the mid–1930s. Antigua ended sugar production in 1971. But with a now antiquated factory and railway, diminishing acreage, and intense international competition, losses mounted. The last "sugar train" rattled into the marshaling yard and the steam-powered factory machinery was shut down on July 31, 2005, bringing an end to over 350 years of sugar production on the island.

But the "Sugar Train" survived. In a partnership agreement between Government and private enterprise, the privately–owned St. Kitts Scenic Railway started running tourist excursions on January 28, 2003. The locomotives and passenger cars of the "Last Railway in the West Indies" proudly carry the national flag, a living link to the bygone days of sugar. As St. Kitts works to complete the transition from the old economy to the new, the little railway has transitioned from Sugar Train to Scenic Train, providing a shining example of how a destination can take an otherwise outdated heritage asset and turn it into a sustainable, successful, and unique anchor attraction.




On the train you can hear this story from the Kittitian people, hear the songs we sing, have a cool drink with us, and wave at our children as the train passes through the villages where many of us live. This is the real Caribbean, the way it has always been, on an island that most people have never seen or heard about. Our story is told in the warm trade winds, and in the clickety-clack of the wheels on the rail joints. Come with us on a journey of beauty and discovery. It is an honor and a pleasure to show you our home.



# SCENIC RAILWAY



## Explore The Undiscovered Caribbean



Come experience a one-of-a kind 3-hour scenic tour of one of the most beautiful and enchanting Caribbean islands aboard "The Last Railway in the West Indies". This historic narrow gauge railway was built between 1912 and 1926 for transporting sugar cane. Today the railway provides visitors an unsurpassed opportunity to experience the scenery and culture of this unspoiled country. 30-mile tour operates 18 miles by rail and12 miles by highway to circle the island.



Phone 1.869.465.7263 • www.StKittsScenicRailway.com

Reservations and information: info@stkittsscenicrailway.com



From its expansive gardens to its colorful Batik studio and shop, Caribelle Batik offers a something for the whole family

# the adventure EDIT

Some holidays are remembered. Others become family legends. Discover these St. Kitts adventures that children will never forget, says *Charisse Leacock Wilkin*




The Volcano Experience




Aquamax Adventures




Brimstone Hill Fortress



Greg's Safaris




Blue Water Safaris

## Caribelle Batik
**WHERE ART MEETS ADVENTURE**

Romney Manor is a feast for the senses with its centuries-old stonework and sprawling gardens, but the real theater unfolds inside the Batik studio. As part of Caribelle's "Back of House" tour, the children get hands-on experience working their own fabric square, tying, dipping and waxing until something entirely their own emerges from the dye pot. There is a particular satisfaction in seeing your child hold up their still-warm-from-the-vat masterpiece. **www.caribellebatikstkitts.com**

## The Volcano Experience
**FOR THE BRAVE**

For families with older children and a taste for adventure, few moments compare with standing on the rim of Mount Liamuiga. We opt for a guided volcano hike with Janeel Boon that climbs through cloud forest thick with giant ferns and towering trees, revealing a side of St. Kitts that most visitors never see. The trail demands just enough effort to make the summit feel earned, and the smiles on everyone's faces justify every step. **www.jbexcursions.com**

## Blue Water Safaris
**LIFE BELOW THE SURFACE**

Nothing impresses my children quite like permission to leap off a boat in open water. Blue Water Safaris folds sailing, snorkeling and island scenery into a thoroughly memorable day at sea. The crew narrate the marine life with the enthusiasm of people who consider this the finest job going, pointing out sergeant majors, the odd ray and, if fortune allows, a turtle gliding by close enough to touch. For my young travelers, that single sighting makes the whole day. **www.bluewatersafaris.com**

All photos © Tina Papies, except turtle by Shutterstock.com

## Greg's Safaris
**JURASSIC PARK ENERGY**

Part off-road excursion, part-island safari, Greg's Safaris ventures well beyond the beach and into the island's dense, green interior. Expect winding mountain roads, unexpected viewpoints and running commentary that brings the island's history to life at every turn. Rattling over roots as the rainforest closes overhead like a tunnel, we feel like we are on a jungle expedition with a genuine sense that something Jurassic might appear around the bend. **www.gregsafaris.com**

> "At one point, I thought a dinosaur was going to walk out of the rainforest!" - LUKE

## Brimstone Hill Fortress
**WHERE HISTORY COMES TO LIFE**

Brimstone Hill's imposing walls, hidden passageways and sweeping views of neighboring islands make it one of the most exhilarating ways to encounter the past, and even the most reluctant young historians tend to leave converted. The children scramble along stone corridors and peer out from the ramparts towards Saba and St Eustatius, and for once, nobody is checking a smart watch or asking how much longer the tour will last. **www.brimstonehillfortress.org**

## Aquamax Adventures
**A DAY ON THE WATER**

We find it quietly thrilling to step aboard a catamaran and watch the shoreline recede. Aquamax Adventures offers a different St. Kitts vantage point, be it snorkeling, spotting marine life or simply savoring the setting sun. It's the kind of day that assembles its own highlight reel as it goes. **www.aquamaxadventures.com** ■

# Lights Out

From full moon partying at a UNESCO World Heritage Site to diving with light-radiating critters, these nocturnal activities guarantee your island adventures continue well into the night, says *Sarah Freeman*



A fire dancer entertains against the backdrop of Brimstone Hill Fortress

## MOON SHINE

Worlds apart from Thailand's famous Full Moon beach raves, **17°62° Gibraltar Gastrolounge's** exclusive Lunar Glow parties are a sophisticated soiree. The open-sided dining room is transformed into a fire pit-warmed lounge with adjoining dance floor. Beats by the likes of DJ Tero play out as guests graze on tapas like Mexican Street Corn and Truffle Fries.

Meanwhile, mesmerizing fire dancers – silhouetted against a 16-foot-tall, illuminated moon installation – pay homage to the original light source used on the site three centuries ago. The only thing that could upstage them is Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park itself, which makes for a one-of-a-kind backdrop.

The destination restaurant has hosted three Lunar Glow events to date, each with a specific color theme that informs everything from the spiked lemonade welcome drinks to the dress code. While their inaugural party took inspiration from the Native American-named Pink Moon, the amber-hued Hunter Moon lit up October's skies.

**Good to Know**: 17°62° Gibraltar Gastrolounge's Lunar Glow parties are ticketed and sell out fast, so be sure to follow their social media for upcoming dates. **www.1762gibraltar.com**

## GLOW UP

The week following a full moon is the optimum time to witness earth's greatest underwater light show. Bioluminescence is a highlight of **St. Kitts Water Sports** nocturnal glass-bottomed kayaking excursion, with participants often seeing shooting stars below their legs or sparks flying as they run their hands through the water.

Leaving the bright lights of Carambola Beach Club behind, kayakers are guided by Dominican native Diamond Williams, who has an encyclopedic knowledge of the island's after-hours marine life.

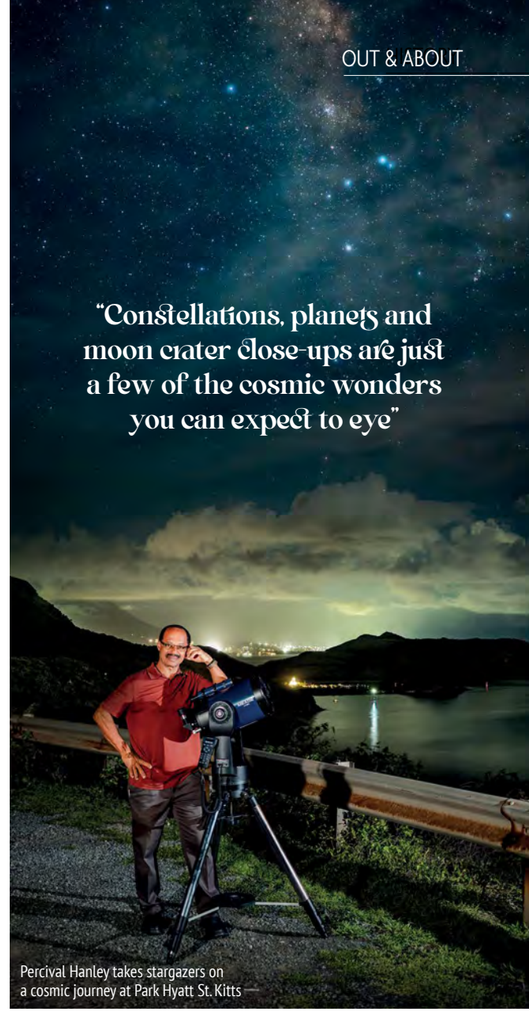
With next to no noise or light pollution, you can expect to see stingrays, starfish, spotted eagle rays – known to leap clean out of the water – and playful sea turtles.



Kayaking into the sunset in search of stingrays and sea turtles



Plankton-eating orange cup corals are a literal highlight of nocturnal diving in St. Kitts



Percival Hanley takes stargazers on a cosmic journey at Park Hyatt St. Kitts

**"Constellations, planets and moon crater close-ups are just a few of the cosmic wonders you can expect to eye"**

Opposite: Photo © Tina Papies. This page: kayaking by Shutterstock.com, orange cup coral © Tim Gurney | Dreamstime.com, Percival Hanley © Tina Papies

A favorite hangout for hawksbills is the sunken junkyard at aptly-named Turtle City; the turnaround point of the exhilarating 90-minute-long excursion, during which luminous jellyfish may also make an appearance.

Top Tip: Even in calm seas you're bound to get wet in the two-person kayaks, so be sure to bring a change of clothes and towel to dry off. **www.stkittswatersports.com**

## WHAT LIES BENEATH

For more glow-in-the-dark discoveries, you'll need to go deeper… literally. Watching orange cup corals open as they feed on plankton is just one of the otherworldly spectacles you can see on a guided group night dive with **Kenneth's Dive Center (KDC)**.

Their go-to nocturnal dive sites include beginner-friendly reefs like Calypso: a hotspot for flying gurnard and spotted eagle rays and sunken freighters, such as *Talata*. Warmed by volcanic vents, this wreckage-turned-reef is home to marine critters big and small. Turtles congregate here, as do intricate basket stars: the night-owls of the starfish world.

**"Watching orange cup corals open as they feed on plankton is just one of the otherworldly spectacles you can see"**

Meanwhile, one mile offshore from Frigate Bay is a dive site known as Spanish Anchor. Strewn with centuries-old, coral-encrusted anchors dropped by Spanish galleons during naval combats, its seabed is even more atmospheric at night.

**Good to Know**: The nocturnal dives operated by KDC rarely exceed 40 feet, making them ideal for beginners who have yet to dip their flippers in dark waters. **www.divekdc.com**

## EXPAND YOUR UNIVERSE

Back on dry land and averting your gaze up rather than down, prepare to have a stellar night out at **Park Hyatt St. Kitts Christophe Harbour**. Making the most of the Southeast Peninsula's low artificial light, the upscale hotel hosts group stargazing experiences led by Kittitian-born amateur astronomer Percival Hanley.

Equal parts educational and entertaining, and suitable for all ages, the hour-long experience takes place in the resort's three-tiered Hall Terraces, which are plunged into darkness for the duration. Constellations, planets and moon crater close-ups are just a few of the cosmic wonders you can expect to eye through the huge fork-mounted telescope.

Top Tip: Continue your stargazing over dinner from the deck of Park Hyatt's oceanfront and family-friendly Fisherman's Village restaurant.

**www.hyatt.com/park-hyatt** ■



Riding wheels rather than waves on Herbert's Beach

# Electric FEEL

A cycling adventure on Nevis' wild, windward side promises sweeping ocean views, heaps of sugar history and an introduction to the island's Big 5, says *Sarah Freeman*

"Sugar was planted all the way down to the sea from 750 feet," says e-biking guide Jane Hansom as I dismount at the foot of a stand of waving palm trees. Not your average avenue of palms, it sweeps down from the former home of Frances "Fanny" Nisbet, who's better known for being the wife of Britain's naval hero Horatio Nelson. In its heyday, the Great House was the showpiece of the now-shuttered Nisbet Plantation Inn and once-thriving 300-year-old sugar plantation, one of several we visit on E Bike Nevis' three-hour Atlantic Side Tour.

## GEARED UP FOR SUCCESS

Scarcely ten minutes earlier our group of six were trying on E Bike Nevis' Pedego Fat Tyre Trail tracker ebikes for size at Mount Nevis Hotel – the launch pad for their trio of two-wheeling tours. Its founder is the formidable and funny Jane Hansom, a Scottish transplant who made Nevis her fulltime home in 2020.

A wearer of many hats beyond her bike helmet, the Sports Marketing Director and Age Group Ironman World Champion is the President of the St. Kitts and Nevis Triathlon Federation and organizer of the annual Nevis to St. Kitts Cross-Channel Swim, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in March 2026. Not one to sit still for long (or sit at all for that matter!), Jane's usually running, swimming or cycling around gum-drop-shaped Nevis.

Having represented U.K. public relations for Nevis Tourism for a decade, she's also a font of knowledge on all facets of island life, past and present. "Nisbet has huge connections with the British Royal family," she says as we stretch our legs at the Caribbean's only beachfront



Jane Hansom

> "I snatch five minutes to plant my sun-starved toes in the white bridal sands of Herbert's Beach"

historic plantation inn; one backdropped by Nevis Peak no less. It was King William IV (then a prince) who gave Fanny away at nearby Montpelier Estate, where she and Captain Horatio Nelson celebrated their nuptials in 1787. I snatch five minutes to plant my sun-starved toes in the white bridal sands of Herbert's Beach before getting back in the saddle.

## GOATS 'N GHOSTS

We continue our ride south along Nevis' 20-mile-long coastal road, which contours rugged east coast bays like coconut-palm-fringed Long Haul. Between the Atlantic trade wind and my bike's five assisted pedal levels, I barely break a sweat, saving the all-too tempting turbo boost for the occasional incline.

"Donkeys are a hangover from the sugar years," Jane says as we watch one opportunistically foraging on some fallen mangoes at Eden Brown, a crumbling 18th-century sugar and cotton estate. The island's doe-eyed donkeys are one of Nevis' Big 5, alongside sheep, cows, vervet monkeys and herds of friendly feral goats – the number one cause of traffic jams on island! "The locals say it's haunted by the plantation owner's daughter, Julia Huggins," says Jane of legend-steeped Eden Brown. Left a spinster after her betrothed was slain at the prenuptial dinner in a bloody duel with his best man – who also happened to be Julia's brother, her ghost is rumored to roam the ruins.

Ready for a roadside refuel, we snack on silk figs (local bananas) at Jama's fruit and veg stand, which overflows with okra, eggplant, watermelon, yam and string beans harvested from Jama's nearby farm.

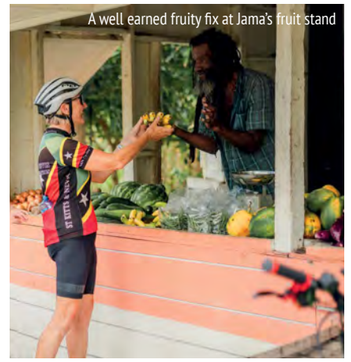
## ONE SWEET TIME CAPSULE

The excursion's halfway point is New River Estate, where we take a well-deserved breather. Established in the early 1720s and shuttered in the fifties, Nevis' last operational sugar plantation was powered by wind, animals, steam and, of course, slaves. "The machinery was brought in from England," guide Dio Hendrickson tells our group as we weave on foot between hulking bits of rusted mechanical parts to all that remains of the Great House, a volcanic stone colonnade. Akin to an open-air museum, there are ramshackle buildings, copper kettles, a 19th-century steam engine, stone windmill remains and a chimney stack that reaches for the heavens.

The 150-acre estate stretches right down



A sobering stop at Cottle Church



A well earned fruity fix at Jama's fruit stand

to the sea, where sands are scattered with early pottery crafted by the indigenous Taíno, who christened the island Dulcina or "Sweet Island" in 800 AD. Dio points out a 300-year-old kiln where coral and shells were burned to make lime for cement before we enjoy a collective cool down in New River's stone cellar, which was once crammed with wooden sugar barrels destined for European shores.

> "Our final pitstop is yet another poignant reminder of the island's colonial past"

Another welcome refuge from the midday sun is the site's broad-armed tamarind tree, where we picnic on juicy wedges of watermelon and homemade snacks straight from Jane's kitchen ahead of the 3.5-mile cycle back.

## PEACE AND CHOIR

Cast a coconut's throw from Mount Nevis Hotel, our final pitstop is yet another poignant reminder of Nevis' colonial past.

Cottle Church was the Caribbean's first Anglican church where people of all color – enslaved and free – could pray alongside one another, explains Jane. We stroll soberingly around the ruined site, taking a moment to study the small plaque acknowledging the names and ages of slaves in the congregation. Cottle Church celebrated its bicentennial in 2024, which was something of a small miracle when you consider this hand-constructed house of worship has been rocked by earthquakes and hurricanes over the years.

Leaving the church on two wheels, I reflect on a morning well spent, one that's left me feeling high on adrenaline, exhilarating views, spirited conversation and Nevisian fruit. **www.ebikenevis.com** ■



Paying a visit to the spectacularly set New River Estate

Photos © Tina Papies



Enjoying more snacks and chats at the halfway point of the tour

# Walking on Sunshine

The Federation is blessed with 84 miles of coastline, ample sunshine and sandy beaches, says *Katherine Barry Verano*

Photo © Patrick O'Brien Photography

## Nevis

### Herbert's
*Best For...* MORNING WALKS

Located on Nevis' Atlantic side, Herbert's is a great place for a morning power walk or afternoon stroll. The water can get choppy, and it's windy. However, the views are gorgeous, and you'll rarely have to share this beach with anyone else.

### Oualie
*Best For...* ACTIVITIES

Catch the passenger ferry or a water taxi directly to this beach from St. Kitts, and sit and relax at Oualie Beach Resort while you watch the boats drift in and out of the bay. This beach is home to sailing, snorkeling, scuba diving and much more. It's also a great starting point for island adventures.

### Windward
*Best For...* BEACHCOMBING

This sometimes wild, but always breathtaking, beach is great for finding beach treasures, but not for swimming (beware riptides). Watch giant waves roll in and discover large driftwood while wandering the shore.

### Lovers
*Best For...* SECLUDED "ALONE TIME"

If you want to pretend you are marooned on a gorgeous and remote desert island, this is your beach. The mile-long Lovers Beach has white sand, dense jungle foliage and crystal-clear Caribbean waters.

### Pinney's
*Best For...* ALL-ROUND APPEAL

Three miles of golden sand and a host of dining establishments ranging from the Four Seasons to the infamous Sunshine's Beach Bar give this beach its claim to fame.

## St. Kitts

### Reggae and Cockleshell
*Best For...* NEVIS VIEWS

Bookended by Reggae Beach Bar and Grill and Spice Mill restaurant and microdistillery, a number of small bars in between ensure you'll be a repeat customer at these beaches.

### South Frigate Bay
*Best For...* NIGHTLIFE

This beach boasts "De Strip" – a line of beach bars that stretches almost the entire length of sand along South Frigate Bay's beach. The vibe is high energy on a Friday night and won't disappoint during the daytime either.

### Sandy Bank
*Best For...* ROMANTIC EVENING STROLLS

Sandy Bank is tucked into the Christophe Harbour community on the Southeast Peninsula, with only one restaurant – The Pavilion – gracing its otherwise untouched shores. Little shade means it's best explored during an evening walk or for short periods of time.

### South Friar's Bay
*Best For...* A SUNDAY AFTERNOON LIME

South Friar's Bay on the Southeast Peninsula is home to calm water and a great reef for snorkeling. Its sandy beach is perfect for an afternoon picnic under the shade of swaying palms.

### Major's Bay
*Best For...* EXPLORING

Located adjacent to the car ferry on the Southeast Peninsula, this quiet beach has white sand and no bars. A shipwreck just off the beach makes for good snorkeling and fun exploring.

| | |
|---|---|
| Loungers | Bars |
| Swimming | Restaurants |
| Watersports | Snorkeling |

On the western or Caribbean side of both islands, the sea tends to be calmer.

On the eastern side facing the Atlantic, there can be bigger waves coming in.

*"The views are gorgeous, and you'll rarely have to share this beach with anyone else"*

Nevis Yacht Charters

# Trial & Seek

Discover the history, heritage and natural wonders of Nevis, where the only limit to adventure is the number of days in your stay BY SUZANNE GORDON

## You be the Judge

### THE TRIAL OF HAMILTON & NELSON

Did you ever think you'd be called to jury duty in paradise? That can happen on Nevis, where visitors decide who's guilty: Alexander Hamilton or Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson. The brainchild of tourism guru Greg Phillip, The Trial of Hamilton & Nelson features local professional actors as the lawyers and judge, but it's the audience who rules. "Had Hamilton and Nelson actually met, what would these two men say to each other knowing the many parallels in their lives?" Phillip wonders. "They had Nevis in common, born a year apart, died a year apart." The cast of seven, which includes a judge, bailiff, director of historical prosecution and lawyers, tells the story until the time comes for the jury-audience to vote. The play has set performances monthly and can be hired for groups. For more information, visit www.nevissuntours.com.

## Giddy Up NEVIS EQUESTRIAN CENTRE

For both experienced equestrians and newbie novices, exploring Nevis "off road" is the way to go, traversing hills and valleys, even the island's beaches. Erica Guilbert, who runs the Nevis Equestrian Centre, says that all levels of riders can join in for the group or private tours that generally run 1.5 hours, starting from their stables in Cotton Ground. Even kids under six can be accommodated on a walking ride at their arena. Guests rave about their rides, and heading into the Caribbean Sea on horseback remains one of the highlights of their visit. To book a ride, visit www.nevishorsebackriding.com.

## Prôlific Palms PALM GARDEN NEVIS

The largest palm collection in the Caribbean has now become one of the most popular attractions on Nevis with a new tour of the gardens featuring 108 palms and 39 unique trees spread over six acres in Upper Jessups. The owners have added event venue spaces, including two rental homes and a rum bar. Choose the Palm Garden tour, led by general manager MacKee France who takes visitors through the property, or a self-guided version to explore the prolific palms on your own. For more details and a map of the palms, check out www.palmgardennevis.com.

## Island Seafaring

### NEVIS YACHT CHARTERS

There's no better way to view a small island like Nevis than from the sea – it provides a whole new perspective. And a day out on the high seas with Nevis Yacht Charters is the perfect way to go. Skimming along on the 45-foot Jeanneau Sun Odyssey sloop *Revenge* with Captain Miles Denne at the helm, there's time for snorkeling crystal clear waters, sipping on a rum punch, casting a few lines or simply enjoying a sunset sail. It's your own private yachting adventure for groups of eight. Prepare to see a green flash and learn about the sea from Captain Miles, who's also a marine biologist and the perfect guide to the offshore reefs. To book a sail, visit www.nevisyachtcharters.com.

## Off-Road Adventure FUNKY MONKEY

Veer off the blacktop and into the hills, valleys and back roads of Nevis with an exciting 4-wheel ATV tour led by Funky Monkey Tour's experienced guides. They know all the secret sites on Nevis! The island has more open land than roads, so an ATV is the best way to see historic ruins, hidden beaches and natural spots with the best views. As they say, "the fun begins where the pavement ends" in a non-tipping, all-terrain vehicle equipped with a roof, automatic power and cooler loaded with refreshments. Explore roads and rainforests, beaches and bush, resorts and ruins. Morning and afternoon excursions available at www.funkymonkeytours.com.

## Grêen Thumb Haven

### BOTANICAL GARDENS OF NEVIS

Nevis flora and fauna are plentiful, and the best way to get a clear understanding of what you are seeing is to visit The Botanical Gardens of Nevis. Six acres of fabulous gardens are a treat for all the senses with gurgling water features, exotic tropical plants, towering palms, bountiful fruit trees, interesting orchids and the soothing sounds of nature down every hidden path. Highlights are the Rainforest Conservancy (reminiscent of Kew Gardens in the U.K.), the Great House, a reminder of its sugar estate heritage, with a boutique and the Oasis Restaurant which serves refreshing beverages. For more information, visit www.botanicalgardensofnevis.com. ■

Opposite Page: Photo © Tina Papies. This Page: All © Tina Papies except Trial of Hamilton & Nelson courtesy of Nevis Sun Tours, Funky Monkey Tours © Sarah Freeman and Palm Garden Nevis courtesy of their archives





The Botanical Gardens of Nevis

"Exploring Nevis "off road" is the way to go, traversing hills and valleys, even the island's beaches"



Funky Monkey Tours



The Trial of Hamilton & Nelson



Nevis Equestrian Centre



Palm Garden Nevis

# Young Talent, Big Dreams



Greyson draws inspiration from St. Kitts and Nevis World Champion and Olympic sprinter Kim Collins

Behind every medal, match and milestone, these young athletes embody talent, determination and island pride shaped by a community of encouragement

BY HEIDI FAGERBERG

## Greyson Burrell

A LIFE IN MOTION

For Greyson, sailing stands above everything. "There is just something about it – the water, the wind and how sailboats work. I just love it!" he says.

His sporting journey began at age one in baby swimming classes. As he grew, he added football, tennis, golf and cycling. Sailing came almost by chance. "I attended a summer camp at St. Kitts Yacht Club when I was 5 and liked it, so I joined the Saturday classes," he recalls.

Greyson has represented St. Kitts and Nevis in tennis, sailing, swimming, triathlon and most recently cycling. He won his first road race in Antigua and competed at the Optimist North American Championships in Halifax, Canada. He finished among the top 10 at CARIFTA 2025 in triathlon and qualified twice for the OECS Swimming Championships.

Greyson's journey has not always been easy. At his first international sailing championship, he was sick the night before racing, but still competed. "You must mentally push yourself and say I can do this," he explains.

> "There is just something about it – the water, the wind and how sailboats work. I just love it!"

Some of Greyson's goals are to qualify for the Optimist World Championships in 2027 and to make another trip to the OECS Championships.

Growing up in St. Kitts has shaped his versatility. "It has helped me become the athlete I am today because it is a small island, so it has made it easy to do all sports," he says. The ability to train year-round is a major advantage, and he draws inspiration from legendary sprinter Kim Collins, whose success shows that athletes from small islands can compete and win on the world stage.

Outside competition, Greyson enjoys his six pets, fishing with his father, learning French, playing piano and being part of The Swaggers dance class.



Greyson credits the St. Kitts Yacht Club summer sailing camp for igniting his passion for sailing

This Page: Photos provided by the Burrell family; Opposite Page: Skyla swimming by Melissa Siméon / Co Ligue de Natation Martinique and other photo of Skyla provided by her family ; Brandon Brisbane © Tina Papies

## Skyla Connor

AT HOME IN THE WATER

Water has always been part of Skyla's life. Before becoming a competitive swimmer, she represented St. Kitts and Nevis in sailing. But it was in the water, not just on it, where she found her passion.

For Skyla, the pool and sea are where community and determination meet. "My parents, coaches and teammates inspire me the most," she says. "They offer their support and encourage me to work hard."

A defining moment for Skyla, she was the first female swimmer to represent St. Kitts and Nevis in the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland, an achievement that reflects her talent and discipline.

Swimming has tested her perseverance. Early-morning double-session training and balancing schoolwork is challenging. "What keeps me going is my teammates because we're all going through the same struggles together," she says. "Even when practice is difficult, having a team around you makes it more enjoyable."

Growing up in Nevis shaped Skyla's journey. While the Federation does not yet have a competition pool, community hotels such as Montpelier Plantation, Mount Nevis Hotel and Royal St. Kitts provide training facilities. The St. Kitts and Nevis Aquatics Federation and the St. Kitts and Nevis Olympic Committee are both helping Skyla pursue her dream of qualifying for the 2028 Olympic Games with a training scholarship and support.



Skyla was the first female swimmer to represent SKN in the Comonwealth Games



Skyla won silver in the 2024 OECS 50m breaststroke

> "What keeps me going is my teammates because we're all going through the same struggles together"

"The community just jumps together to support one another," she says. "With limited means and resources, you really learn how to make the most of what you do get."

At home, many practices take place at the Nevis Aquatic and Sailing Centre. "I love the ocean water where sea turtles and fish keep me company," she says.

On land, Skyla loves cooking and baking and enjoying the food she makes.



Brandon's biggest dream is to play the sport of tennis for life.

## Brandon Brisbane

COMMUNITY ON THE COURT

For Brandon, tennis is about dedication. "I love tennis because it brings me a genuine sense of joy every single time I pick up a racket," he says.

Tennis is especially meaningful because of the people – coaches, mentors, family and community members – whose guidance and support carry him from home courts to tournaments across the Caribbean and the Americas.

Raised with a strong sense of togetherness, Brandon believes everyone has a role in helping young people succeed. His father is his greatest inspiration and taught him that hard work and effort matter most and giving your best can be its own reward.

He is also inspired by his teammates, who train daily with determination. "Even though we compete against each other, we celebrate and push each other to do better, work harder, play smarter," he says.

Brandon was accepted into the Junior Tennis Championship Center in Maryland, where he will pursue his goal of playing college tennis. But his biggest dream is to play the sport for life.

Brandon misses the food, especially his grandmother's, when traveling for tournaments. "You'd think it would be fun eating in hotels, but I miss our local food."

When not on the court, Brandon can be found playing cricket or volleyball on the beach or learning languages. ■




The Federation has a robust calendar of fun and festive sporting events for spectators and participants. Click to learn more!




## ST. KITTS

### Dining / Cafés / Bars

16 — Ah'Len Lebanese
36 — Arthurs Restaurant
83 — Carambola Beach Club
1 — Coconut Farm Restaurant
18 — Coconut Grove
57 — El Fredos
12 — Indian Summer
67 — Marshalls
34 — Michaels Burgers
82 — Orchid Bay
50 — Palms Court Gardens
17 — Pizza Boys
66 — Poinciana
6 — Reggae Beach Bar & Grill
15 — Rituals Coffee
14 — Rituals Sushi
10 — Rock Lobster
58 — Serendipity
9 — SOHO Coffee House/SOHO Lounge/ Nykos Rooftop
5 — Spice Mill
43 — Sprat Net
11 — Taste It
37 — The Kitchen Restaurant & The Mill Bar

### Attractions & Tours

40 — Brimstone Hill Fortress
62 — Dolphin Discovery
47 — Fairview Inn Great House
35 — Scenic Railway
46 — Shadwell Great House
42 — Sky Safari
39 — St. Kitts Eco Park

### Hotels

38 — Belle Mont Sanctuary Resort at Kittitian Hill
63 — Bird Rock Beach Hotel
68 — Calypso Bay Resort
33 — Koi Resort
4 — Park Hyatt St. Kitts
19 — Royal St. Kitts Hotel
32 — St. Kitts Marriott & Royal Beach Casino
13 — Sugar Bay Club
45 — Sunset Reef
69 — Timothy Beach Resort

### Services

2 — iConnect
87 — Go4Fit Studio SKN
64 — Hertz Car Rental
85 — IAS Car Rental
44 — Kayan Jet Private Jet Terminal
3 — Park Hyatt Pier
7 — Reggae Beach Pier (Water Taxis)
49 — Ross University
48 — St. Kitts Investment Promotion Agency (SKIPA)
65 — Thrifty Car Rental
92 — Blu Waves Water Taxi & Charters
93 — Islander Watersports

### Shopping

41 — Caribelle Batik
86 — Corks & Screws - St. Kitts
88 — Island Market
91 — Sugar Apple

### Real Estate

59 — B. Kassab & Associates
60 — B. Williams Property Management
84 — Christophe Harbour & Safe Harbour
61 — Island Life Properties
89 — Manor by the Sea
90 — REMAX
8 — Sundance Ridge

## NEVIS

### Dining / Cafés / Bars

112 — Bananas
95 — Chrishi Beach
119 — Drift
94 — L'Escale
103 — Lime Beach Bar
107 — Moho's Bistro
105 — Nevis Coffee Company
108 — Nevis Peak Brewery
111 — Oasis in the Gardens Thai Rest. & Bar
104 — Sunshine's Bar & Grill
98 — Yachtsman Grill
106 — Zanzibar

### Attractions & Tours

102 — BNE Tours
101 — Four Seasons Golf Course
118 — Newcastle Pottery
121 — Palm Gardens

### Hotels

00 — Four Seasons Resort & Four Seasons Resort Estate
114 — Golden Rock Inn
113 — Montpelier Nevis
117 — Mt. Nevis Hotel
120 — Oualie Beach Resort
97 — Paradise Beach Nevis
115 — The Hermitage Inn

### Services

92 — Blu Waves Water Taxi & Charters
93 — Islander Watersports
109 — Nevis Tourism Authority
110 — Thrifty Car Rental - Nevis

### Shopping

96 — Corks & Screws - Nevis
116 — Nevis Island Living

### Real Estate

99 — Sugar Mill Real Estate

## Travelling between St. Kitts and Nevis

There are several ways to get across the channel which separates St. Kitts and Nevis:

**Passenger Ferries** - Comfortable boats make the 45-minute crossing between Basseterre and Charlestown regularly – more frequent early morning and early evening. One-way fares from EC$26.

**Car Ferry** - iConnect car ferry operates between Majors Bay on St. Kitts' Southeast Peninsula and Charlestown Pier on Nevis. It makes six 30-minute crossings each way daily, leaving each island on alternate hours. Fares vary depending on vehicle size. iconnectskn.com 869-662-6818

**Water Taxi** - Water taxis are privately owned and can be booked ahead, costing from US$20-30 per person one way. Islander Watersports Nevis 869-662-7081 | Blu Waves Water Taxi and Charters 869-662-1762

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Detailed maps • Directions • Recommendations • Island info



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