

Celebrate Easter on Ambergris Caye!! P.3

*Experience the Chef's Table
at Pirate's Treasure P.13*

*Caye Boy: Bringing island life
to readers worldwide! P.14*

Caribbean Critters

Iguana love! - P.12

The elusive whale shark - P. 15



From the Editor *Tamara Sniffin*



Welcome to the month of March in Belize, and what a wonderful month it is! The rains have finished, the breezes are abundant and the bugs (for the most part) are long gone! Just like how we Belizeans are good at filling up our weekends with fun on top of fun, we have jam packed our March *My Beautiful Belize* issue with a little bit of everything!

Yes, it's time to gather up the kids, stock the coolers, grab the grill and all your favorite water toys and head for the beach! As the country gears up for Semana Santa (Holy Week), others refer to it as "Yahoo, let's have

some fun week!" Countrywide, many observe the days of Holy Week with ceremony and religious rigor, while others simply enjoy the time to play with friends and family. Of course there ARE ways of doing both!

March is also the time of year when the elusive whale sharks return to our southern waters. I have yet to swim with these gentle giants (not that I haven't tried), and yes it is still on my bucket list! Belize is blessed with many amazing creatures and when you read about a couple of them in this issue, the whale shark and the Green Iguana, I'm am sure some of the fun facts will surprise you.

We also share with you this month the super cute children's books "Caye Boy" authored by Jessica Retseck Wigh and tempt your taste buds with a look at Pirate's Treasure's Chef's Table experience. We welcome you to *My Beautiful Belize*, and here you can read all about it!

Weh Di Go Ahn Eena January & February?!

March 6th – 9th: The annual La Ruta Maya River Challenge. The biggest kayak/canoe race of its kind, follow them through the Belize River Valley!



March 7th & 8th – Baron Bliss Harbour Regatta, Belize City

March 10th – Saga Humane Society International Theme Cook-Off at Island Time Beach Bar. VIP Tickets: \$40BZ/person for reserved seating and waiter service (Call 610-0992). General seating tickets: \$20BZ/person - on sale at 6PM at Island Time. All proceeds will benefit the Saga Spay/Neuter Initiative Program. It's Hip To Snip!

March 17th – 3rd Annual St. Patrick's Day Bash, Crazy Canuck's beach bar, San Pedro Town



March 21st & 22nd – Fiesta de San Jose, San Jose Nuevo Palmar Village, Orange Walk District



March 25th – Belize vs. Grand Cayman Island FIFA 2018 World Cup Qualifiers, FFB Stadium, Belmopan, 8PM

Wolfe's Woofers

By: Dennis Wolfe

Auction

"Charlie, why don't you go over to Caye Caulker with me tomorrow?" I asked. "A gringo who is moving back to the U.S. is having all of his property auctioned off to pay his debts. I want to go to the auction."

In Caye Caulker the first thing I did was call Scott to come meet us for breakfast. He and I had played music together for years when the Oceanside Bar was still in business.

After we chatted for a while I said, "Guys, I need a favor from you at this auction. I want to bid on a Yamaha four wheel ATV that's up for sale but I need your help." "What do you need?" Scott asked.

"I came over here two weeks ago to look over the items up for auction. I made the mistake of pointing out to a group of locals what a nice vehicle that Yamaha is. Now I'm worried that lot of people will be bidding on it."

"What are you going to do?" Scott asked.

"I want to control the bidding so I don't pay too much for it. I won't even bid but you guys take turns steadily bidding a hundred dollars at a time. That should scare the other bidders into dropping out."

"How much do you want to pay for it?" Charlie asked.

"I don't want to pay more than two thousand dollars."

When the Yamaha came up for auction I went across the street to a restaurant to wait. It took a while but finally Charlie and Scott came in.

"We got it for sixteen hundred," Charlie said.

"That's great!" I said. "I knew that strategy would work. Thanks to you guys I saved four hundred dollars."

"We could have got it for less," Scott said.

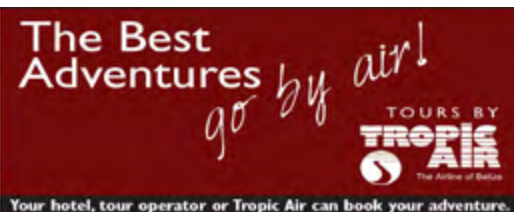
"What do you mean?"

"We were so concentrated on bidding that it took us a while to discover we were the only ones left in it. Everybody else dropped out at seven hundred dollars."



SuDoku Time! Answers on Page 10

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1			8	9			4	



Celebrating Easter on Ambergris Caye

By Mary Gonzalez

Easter is coming and Ambergris Caye's shores eagerly await visitors to take in the beauty we've been blessed so abundantly with! The holiday is celebrated in a VARIETY of ways. San Pedro

Town offers devotional celebrations to day-long beach parties to all-night club 'parties'. Everyone on the island has an agenda, and there's no shortage of ways to indulge!

Culture/Religion:

Roman Catholics consider Easter the most holy time of the year. San Pedro Town is a predominantly Catholic community that observes this time to the fullest.



The San Pedro Roman Catholic Church's celebration of the season is ushered in by the 40 day Lenten season starting on Ash Wednesday. It marks a time for preparation to receive Jesus Christ, culminating on Palm Sunday when Jesus returns to Jerusalem. During Palm Sunday mass, symbolic palm leaves are blessed and given to the congregation who turn them into crosses as a token of their faith.

This is followed by the Holy Thursday mass, whereupon the priest ceremonially washes the participants' feet, just like Jesus did to his apostles. Then the Holy Eucharist is transferred to the Parish Hall where a vigil is held until midnight, which is the time Jesus was betrayed at the Garden of Gethsemane, and is the beginning of Good Friday.

To the Roman Catholics, Good Friday is the most religious day observed in San Pedro. At 4AM the 14 Stations of the Cross are observed, and participants walk around the town to various altars holding images depicting Jesus's final hours of life. Families across town remain at home fasting and preparing for the religious ceremonies that take place in the afternoon.

At mid-day the "Celebration of the Seven Words" begins, symbolizing the seven times Jesus spoke to his followers before his death on the cross. This is followed by a mass service and the Adoration of the Cross. At around 5PM a group of Catholics congregate in front of the church to prepare for the Holy Procession (El Santo Entiero). A casket symbolizing the body of Jesus Christ is carried by the men, while the women carry the statue of The Virgin Mary. The procession moves through the main streets of San Pedro and it is a solemn walk of reverence.

On Holy Saturday the Easter Vigil Mass is held at 7AM. The events continue on Easter Sunday at 7AM with the "Encuentro", when Catholics rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Masses are held in English in the morning at 10AM and in Spanish in the evening at 7PM. The Easter celebrations end on Easter Monday with a mass at 7AM.

The solemnity of the celebrations is not lost on those who observe from afar, and the somber mood during the masses and procession is a time of reflection and contemplation.

Continued on Page 4

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regular menu always available
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Easter Holidays

Continued from Page 3

Family:

There is NO DOUBT that our calling card is our waters. Clear and warm, Easter is the perfect time to head out to the beach, feel the tickle of sand between our toes, and take in the caress of the waves of our glorious Caribbean Sea. Visitors and residents alike flock to the water on the holidays to take in as much Vitamin D as possible while re-connecting with family. It's not unusual to stumble on a group of children playing happily in the sand as mothers and fathers watch from makeshift shade, perhaps snacking on some home-made treats with no plans to head home till the winds get cool and their young ones' eyes start drooping shut.

Continued on Page 5



San Pedro's Best Hot Dog

**Daily Happy Hour
3 - 6PM**

Small Bites
Slider Trios
Ceviche
Keftedes

March is for SNIP
for each purchase
of wine or beer
Ray's will donate \$1
to Saga Humane Society's
Spay/Neuter initiative

Ray's

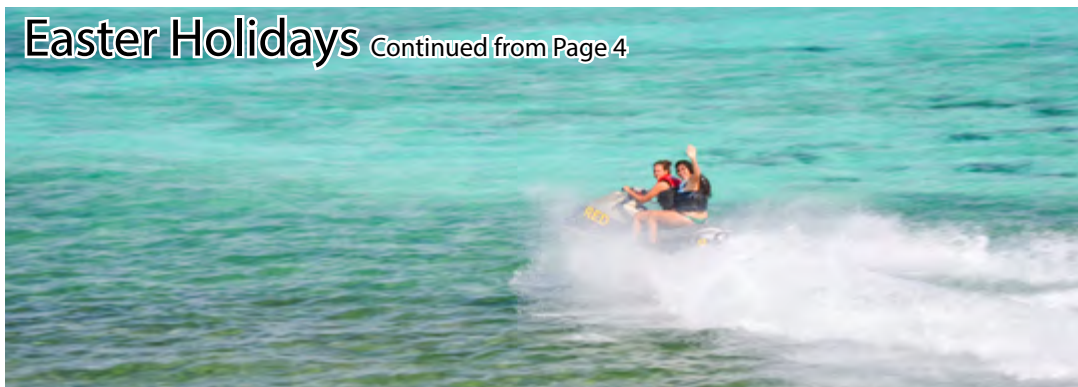


BIG DOG

Featuring
Peel & Eat
JUMBO Shrimp

Beachfront, Black Coral St.
Open Mon-Sat: 11am to 7 pm

Easter Holidays Continued from Page 4



Tanned children shriek with glee as they indulge in some of the simplest water games, and if there are organized games, even better! Teenagers stop being bored when jet skis and parasails are available to take a ride on. Flying kites, snorkeling under docks where fish dart to and fro, building sandcastles, burying each other in piles of wet sand – this magical place offers so much to enjoy! Regardless of how the five-day holiday is spent, there is one place that almost everyone shares in common, and that is the beach!



On the Saturday before Easter the San Pedro Lions International Club hosts a Pancake Brunch with the Easter Bunny. The annual family event is enjoyed by locals and tourist families alike, who partake in the fun-filled morning of food, games, activities and of course the Easter Bunny. The brunch includes pancakes, sausage, a slice of orange and juice. Children especially enjoy the topping table where they can pile their pancakes high with the likes of chocolate syrup, Nuttela, sprinkles, butter, strawberry jam, shredded coconut, cheese and maple syrup. Some kids pick them all! The Easter Bunny is there to entertain and pose for photos. Activities include coloring, bobbing for Easter Eggs, face painting, Egg in Spoon races and a special craft making table. Traditionally the brunch is held from 9AM till noon, and there is a minimal entrance cost.

Continued on Page 6



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COASTAL EXPRESS RUNS:

Departs from ADM: 8:30 AM, 12:30 PM, 5:30 PM, 8:30 PM
Departs from El Secreto: 9:10 AM, 1:10 PM, 6:10 PM, 9:10 PM



Party:

Continued from Page 5

During the day, while deejays and revelers dance and indulge, the beach is full of spectators watching games underway. Volleyball players keep everyone holding their breaths as the ball is spiked and slammed across the net, players diving to try and win the game to claim various prizes up for grabs.



Photos By Tomas Gongora

When the sun goes down, the equation is simple: Alcohol + Music + Island Vibes = PARTY!

Need we really say more? When the daytime parties have eased into night, the island's best-dressed head out to the clubs and special parties planned precisely for the influx of visitors looking for a good time on La Isla Bonita! Promoters and deejays bring across a variety of music and vibes all down the beach and you can get your fill of music and entertainment – we're talking dance contests and games galore! Exhausted, happy revelers can go back home knowing that the bash in San Pedro was (to use the latest phrase) 'on fleek'.

Whatever your preference - whether you choose to indulge in one aspect a day - know that Easter on Ambergris Caye is like no other!



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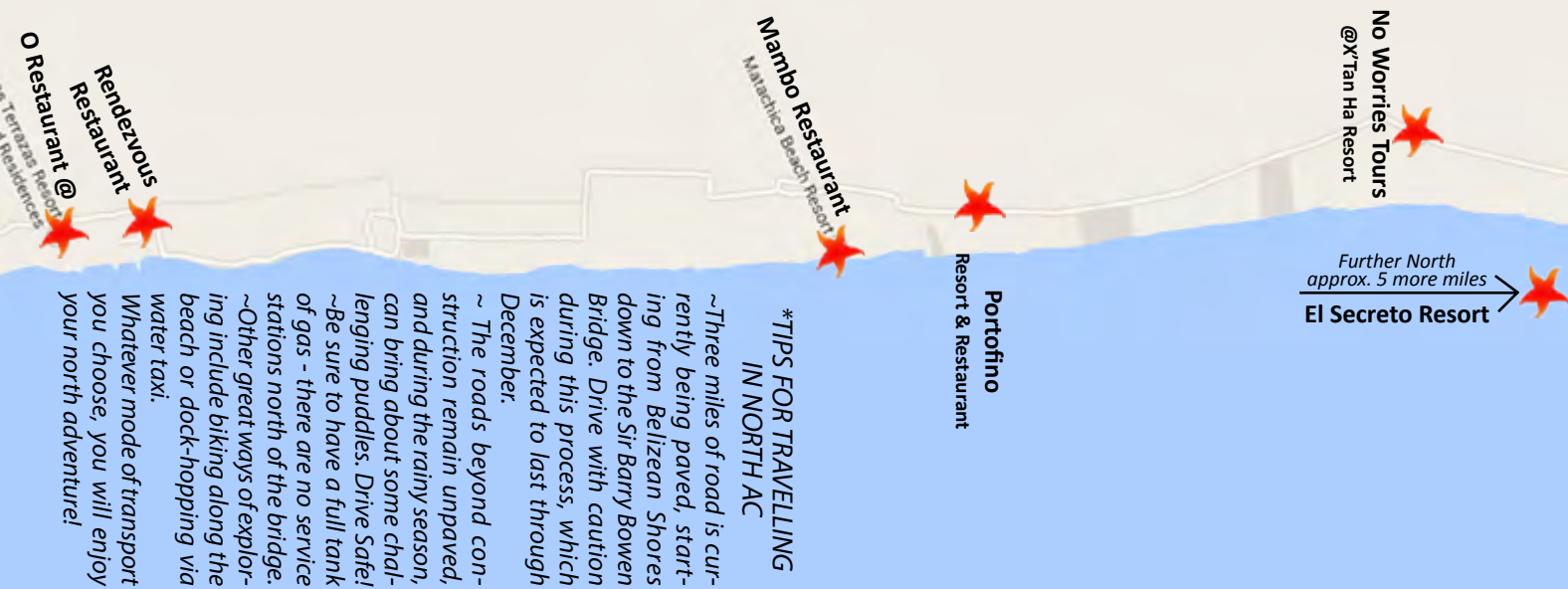
World Cuisine with a Caribbean Splash

2-Miles North at Grand Caribe Resort
Free RT transportation with reservation
PICK UP: 6:15pm RETURN: 9:30pm
from Tuff E Nuff dock by Rubie's in town

Open daily
7am-midnight
226-4000

North Ambergris Caye

©2014, Map not to scale



Further North
approx. 5 more miles
El Secreto Resort

Portofino
Resort & Restaurant

Mambo Restaurant
Matachica Beach Resort

Rendezvous
Restaurant @
Las Terrazas Resort

*TIPS FOR TRAVELLING IN NORTH AC

~Three miles of road is currently being paved, starting from Belizean Shores down to the Sir Barry Bowen Bridge. Drive with caution during this process, which is expected to last through December.

~The roads beyond construction remain unpaved, and during the rainy season, can bring about some challenging puddles. Drive Safe!

~Be sure to have a full tank of gas - there are no service stations north of the bridge.

~Other great ways of exploring include biking along the beach or dock-hopping via water taxi.
Whatever mode of transport you choose, you will enjoy your north adventure!

EAT RAIN RESTAURANT - Two miles north at

Grand Caribe. World cuisine, two dining atmospheres: indoor semi-formal dining and outdoor rooftop casual dining. Wine dinners every 3rd Tuesday of the month. 226-4746, ext. 314 or email info@rainbelize.com. Free boat transfer with reservations: pick-up at 6:15pm, return 9pm by Tuff E Nuff tours, Rubies' dock.

PIRATE'S TREASURE - A unique dining experience with their Chef's Table. Watch as Chef Mar prepares a fresh 3-course Belizean meal over a coconut-husk fire while you enjoy refreshing cocktails and island vibes. Regular Menu always available without reservations. Noon to 11PM. 668-2156.

O RESTAURANT - Central American cuisine with Caribbean flair, at Las Terrazas Resort. Breakfast, lunch, & dinner. Casual chic, or dine alfresco next to the infinity pool. 226-4249.

RENDEZVOUS RESTAURANT & WINERY - Charming and exotic setting on the beach, specializing in Thai and French fusion cuisine. Enjoy the signature wines we produce, from Chardonnays to Cabernet and Merlot and try our new beach bar for lunch. Closed Monday & Tuesday. Reservations recommended. Telephone 226-3426.



PORTOFINO RESTAURANT - Enjoy our Euro-Caribbean inspired menu and spectacular Caribbean views. Also offering a full VEGETARIAN Menu. For Reservations & Free Transportation, please call 226-5096 or 678-5096.

MAMBO RESTAURANT - Enjoy a unique dining experience at this award-winning restaurant at Matachica Resort. Romantic atmosphere with island ambience, offering locally inspired flavors and meals that will excite even the most seasoned palate. Complimentary transportation with reservations - call 226-5010/226-5011.

STAY



AK'BOL - Yoga & Resort. 1 Mile North of Bridge. Open Daily 7AM-9PM. Drop in daily yoga classes at the end of pier + Massage + Tours. Restaurant/Bar on the beach. Thatched Cabanas. Budget rooms with shared bath. 7 night yoga retreats. 626-6296.

PLAY



FELIZ BAR & GRILL: Your north side destination for sports and darts and super fast WiFi. We have 4 x 46" HDTV's and 2 dart boards, a great selection of fresh food including: burgers, paninis, pizzas, wings and much more, ice cold beers, local rum and cocktails and a nice cool breeze.



LEGEND'S ROAD HOUSE - Home of Tuesday JAM nights- live music starting at 7pm all musicians welcome. Now serving Texas style smoked meats and a sit down southern breakfast starting at 6am. 1/4 mile north of the bridge.



KAMA LOUNGE: Kama Lounge is under new ownership. We are located 1 minute across the bridge on the beach in front of Reef Village. We serve breakfast, lunch, snacks & dinner all day. Pool open. Daily happy hour from 4-7. Closed on Wednesdays.

PALAPA BAR AND GRILL - 1.5 Miles north of Bridge. Daily 10am - 9pm. Relax on the inner-tubes and have your bucket of ice cold beers lowered to you. Outdoor seating, awesome smoked food, cheeseburgers, seafood and tropical drinks and an astonishing view!

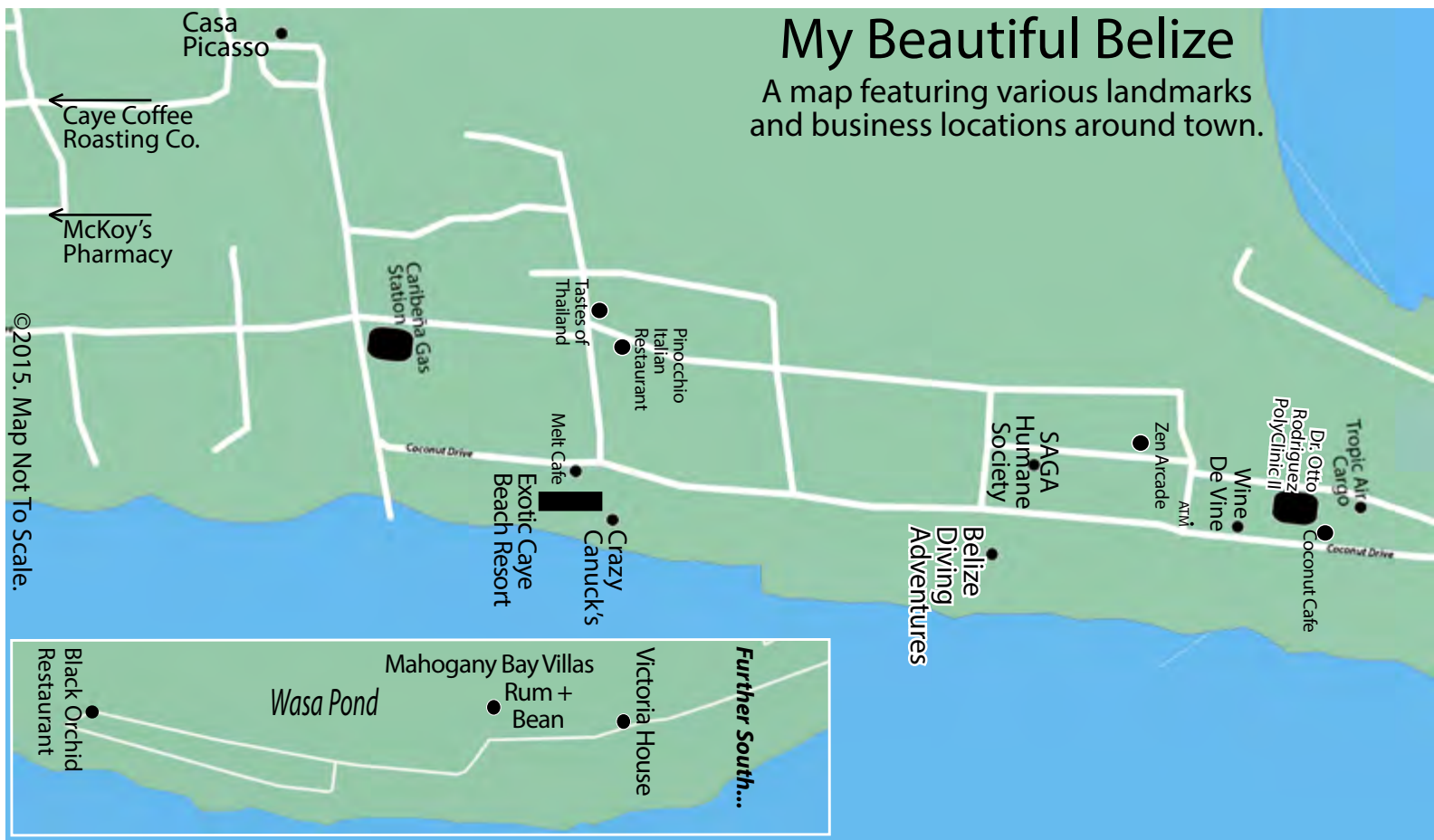
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EATS & TREATS



BLACK ORCHID RESTAURANT & LOUNGE: Come visit us; just a quick Golf Cart Ride 2 1/2 miles South of Town after the Croc Pond Lagoon and well before the Marco Gonzales Maya Site. Open Tuesday through Saturday from 11am-9pm. www.blackorchidrestaurant.com. Reservations Recommended (501) 206-2441.



CASA PICASSO RESTAURANT: Tapas dining in an artful setting. Global flavors from local ingredients...martinis, wines, cocktails. Vegetarian & gluten-free options. Open Tuesday-Saturday at 5:30pm. Last reservations 9pm...226-4443 or reservations@casapicassobelize.com. Located south of town past Caribena Gas Station & Belikin Distributor. Ask about complimentary taxi pick-up/drop-off service within San Pedro Town. Check out our specials & "Tasting Thursday" menu at facebook.com/CasaPicassoBelize & casapicassobelize.com.



MELT CAFE at Exotic Caye Resort: Artisan Grilled Cheese and Specialty Sandwiches. Vegetarian and Healthy Options. Fresh Fruit Smoothies, Beer, Wine, Bloody Mary's, Watermelon and Orange Juice Mimosa's. Serving Breakfast and Lunch all day from 7am – 4pm. Free WiFi, closed Wednesdays. See map for location.



THE COCONUT CAFÉ: The ONLY Build-Your-Own Pizza, Panini and Wrap restaurant on the Caye. Choose from over 20 fresh ingredients. Open for breakfast and lunch from 7am to 3pm (closed Sundays), on Coconut Drive across from Ramon's Village. 226-4311.

THE COFFEE BAR: Bringing the Starbucks culture to Ambergris Caye, The Coffee Bar offers the best atmosphere, fastest wifi, cafe music, and a comfortable setting. They serve a wide assortment of hot and iced coffee drinks, tea, smoothies, soft drinks as well as a light breakfast and lunch menu. 226-2233.



RAY'S BIG DOG: San Pedro's only Fast Casual palapa dining experience offers artisanal All Beef and Chicken hot dogs loaded with gourmand toppings, peel & eat shrimp growlers, and old school Ice cream floats hand made in three flavors. At the entrance of the Tacklebox dock.

PINOCCHIO ITALIAN RESTAURANT & Pizzeria. The only authentic Italian restaurant on the island. A San Pedro favourite! Real Italian pizza, thin crust, baked in wood-fire oven. Come enjoy our daily specials, including homemade fettuccini and lasagne. 632-8975.



TASTES OF THAILAND: Authentic Thai Food – cooked and prepared by Thai Chef. Available for Small parties and private booking on Mondays. Regular Hours: Tuesdays – Saturdays 5:30-9PM. Corner Seagrape Drive and Hurricane Street. Reservations Preferred: 226-4778 / 629-0527. Check us out on TripAdvisor and Facebook.



HURRICANES CEVICHE BAR & GRILL - A whirlwind of delicacies! Fine open-air dining and delicious tropical drinks. Finger foods and snacks to delectable gourmet seafood specials and pastas. Monday: 10:00 am - 12:00 am, Wed - Sun: 10:00 am - 12:00 am. Reservations, 226-4124; tanishatours@btl.net

My Beautiful Belize

A map featuring various landmarks and business locations around town.



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CAYE COFFEE ROASTING COMPANY: Local fresh roasted coffee manufactured in San Pedro Town. Available throughout Ambergris Caye and at select locations in mainland Belize. For more information visit <http://www.cayecoffee.bz>.

GRANIEL'S DREAMLAND: Exotic Hard Woods and Mahogany Products made locally on the island. Gift Items, indoor and outdoor furniture, carvings, and custom-made orders. Worldwide Shipping. Free Delivery to Hotel, Airport or Boat within town limits. 226- 2938, Pescador Drive. granielsdreamland2@yahoo.com, www.granielsdreamlandbelize.com Facebook: Graniels Dreamland

MCKOY'S PHARMACY: Your Pharmacy that cares. Last pharmacy south of town. Best price for Viagra/ Cialis. We do special order medications and prescriptions. Services include: Checking of Pressure, Sugar/glucose, and Nebulizer treatments. Open Mon-Sat 8:30AM-8PM , 9AM-midday Sundays. 626-1240/621-1648/226-4606 bzherbalist@yahoo.com.

MOHO CHOCOLATE COMPANY: From bean to bar: handmade chocolate with Organic Maya Cacao. Milk & dark chocolate, truffles, skin care products and souvenirs. Black Coral Drive. 625-1980.

OASIS SPA – Relax, Refresh, Renew with our variety of treatments, including pre-natal massages, deep tissue, aromatherapy and more. On the pier at Fido's Courtyard. 206-2600, oasisspabelize@gmail.com.

ZEN ARCADE - Y O G A, Pilates, Dance, Body Work, Paddle Board Yoga, meditation, fitness for all levels and interest. Plus massage, hair & nails, healthy cafe/juice bar, Rx cosmetics, childcare, serenity pool and playground all in one location! www.zenarcadebelize.com, 226-3177.

CASTAWAY CAYE WATERSPORTS: Enjoy a fun day out on the water with family and friends on our Seadoo Jetskis and Banana Boats. Or get a bird's eye view as you Parasail over paradise with our professional

staff. Located on Wet Willy's Dock. 671-3000.



"12" is the only shop in Belize that features only Belizean made luxury products & gifts suitable for both locals and tourists. Featuring exclusive items from around the country from soaps & scrubs to handbags & sauces, we ship same day throughout Belize. www.12belize.com 670-5272.

SPINDRIFT HOTEL: Conveniently located near the banks, supermarkets and restaurants, our hotel offers an array of affordable rooms; offering patio view, beach front apartments, economic rooms, studio apartments and beach front rooms. Email: spinhotel@btl.net or (501)-226-2174 / 2018.

PARTY PARTY

CRAZY CANUCKS BEACH BAR: Beach bar located at Exotic Caye Beach Resort. Open daily, 11am-midnight. Bar food & daily drink specials. **Mondays:** Live reggae @8pm **Tuesdays:** DJ Debbie @8pm **Every other Thursday:** Splash n Paint @2pm **Fridays:** Trivia @7pm Karaoke @8:30pm **Sundays:** Live music/horseshoes @3pm **Phone: 670-8001** Find us on Facebook.

LOLA'S PUB - The best stocked bar on the island! Martinis, Single Malt, Bourbon, Pickleback Shots, Tequila Shot Chillers. KARAOKE FREE ZONE. Across from Belize Bank on Front Street. 206-2120.

WAHOO'S LOUNGE - We are home to the WORLD FAMOUS CHICKEN DROP! Thursday nights starting at 6PM. Drink specials, games and an amazing view of the reef. Located on the beach at the Spindrif Hotel. 226-2002.

MAMACITAS



MAMACITAS ENTERTAINMENT CENTER - The Premiere Adult Entertainment Center in San Pero Town. Let us help you take off a load. Featuring The King's Table and our new VIP Lounge. Tuesday – Sunday 2PM – Midnight. Happy Hour – 5-7PM. Available for Bachelor Parties, Private Parties and Intimate Get Together. 664-7258.



LUNA LOCA - Coolest place to party on the beach in San Pedro. Drink, Dance, Party, Get Loca! Serving a wide variety of tropical cocktails. Saturday Night: Free To Be @ Luna Loca. Mon - Tue: 11:00 am - 12:00 am, Thu - Sun: 11:00 am - 12:00 am. 637-2412.

North Ambergris Caye

©2014, Map not to scale



CAPTAIN MORGAN'S RETREAT & CASINO - Full service beach resort 3.5 miles north Ambergris Caye. Cozy thatched casitas, spacious villas, and luxury condos, 3 pools, restaurant, bar, tour center, grocery store, spa and fun casino are the perfect combination for the ultimate getaway! Call 226-2207 for reservations.

EL SECRETO is a barefoot luxury resort comfortably secluded just miles north of San Pedro. Dine at the most beautiful setting on the island and discover the secret flavors of Miss Miguella's kitchen! Offering a variety of international food with a Belizean touch. Call 236-5111.

REAL ESTATE

DIAMANTE BELIZE: Now under construction, the luxurious Diamante will feature 5 standalone buildings of 2- and 3-bedroom condos with high-end finishes throughout. Full strata beachfront condominiums in the heart of town! Visit diamantebelize.com to learn more!

Tourist Information

AA Meetings: Tel: 627-1585. English Meetings:
'Boca Del Rio': Mon - Sat: 6PM - 7PM (#5 Boca Del Rio Dr).
'Clean & Serene': Tues & Fri, noon, Catholic Church Parish Hall.
UltraMar Group (Spanish): T/W/F/Sun: 7:30PM, San Pablo Church.
Belize Tourism Board - 227-2419.
Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA) - 227-5717.
Belize Hotel Association - 223-0669, bha@btl.net
San Pedro Tourist Guide Association 226-2391.

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COASTAL XPRESS WATER TAXI - Scheduled ferry service & water taxi for Ambergris Caye. Phone 226-3007.
GET TRANSFERS - Executive transfer and tour services anywhere in Belize: Chetumal, Cancun, Quintana Roo & even Merida and Guatemala. Phone: 422-2485 (fx: 422-3511) or email: info@gettransfers.com.
RAINBOW TAXI - Caye Caulker golf cart, guided island tours, reliable service. 226-0123. Minerva: 661-6254 or Champ 602-8136.

IMPORTANT #'S

POLICE - 206-2022 / **FIRE** - 206-2372
South Police Sub-Station - 610-4911
Emergency - 911
Crimestoppers - 800 922-TIPS
Dr. Otto Rodriguez San Pedro Polyclinic
IL - 226-2536.
Emergency: 660-2871
US Embassy - 822-4011
Canadian Consulate - 223-1060
British High Commissioner - 822-2146



My Beautiful Belize
VISITOR GUIDE

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Published by *The San Pedro Sun LTD.*

Sudoku Answers Puzzle on Page 2

2	5	7	8	1	3	6	9	4
9	8	4	2	5	6	3	7	1
1	3	6	4	7	9	8	5	2
8	2	5	6	3	4	9	1	7
4	1	3	5	9	7	2	8	6
6	7	9	1	8	2	5	4	3
5	4	2	7	6	8	1	3	9
7	9	8	3	2	1	4	6	5
3	6	1	9	4	5	7	2	8

Work, Live, and Play on the
beautiful island of Ambergris Caye.

Now under construction.



DIAMANTE

Beachfront Suites

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DiamanteBelize.com

I Guana Love You!

By Tamara Sniffin



What kind of critters do you have in your backyard? Maybe some birds and an occasional squirrel, depending on where you are from? In Belize, we not only have a variety of birds in our yards but a variety of lizards as well. From small chirping geckos to an assortment of anoles, we often catch just a glimpse of these quick little lizards as they dash under foliage, rocks or behind the refrigerator! However, the lizard that reigns supreme in our neck of the woods (or jungle I should say) is the Green Iguana. This amazing reptile plays an important role in Belize's history and ecology.

First, some background on iguanas: Even though it goes through various color changes during its life, it is technically known as the Green Iguana, with the rather unimaginative scientific name of *Iguana iguana*. The name iguana itself is said to come from the native Caribbean Taino language, *iwana*. Here in Belize things are a bit more creative, with Bamboo Chicken, Guana and Garobo for the bigger, more mature males, who take on an orange hue and can grow up to five or six feet from nose to tail tip.

Why Bamboo Chicken, you may ask? The iguana has graced many a Belizean table over the years with its meat and eggs, and is still a welcome part of the national diet in some areas of the country. It has been a part of Belizean tradition to hunt iguanas during the months of March and April, especially the females that are carrying developing eggs that are laid in June. The eggs are considered a delicacy, especially when made into a stew and served with coconut rice. The little bit of meat found on this reptile is also cooked and eaten. And, like most unfamiliar game meat, when people ask what it tastes like, the usual answer is, well... chicken.

Iguanas are now protected under the Belize Wildlife Protection Act and a license is needed to hunt and sell them. The hunting season is closed each year from February 1st through the 30th of June. Juvenile iguanas in Belize are shades of green, and when they mature between two and three years of age, they change from the normal green and dark brown into light shades of orange and the female takes on her fertile camouflage.

Sunlight is essential to these cold-blooded critters, who are always in search of a sunny tree branch. They barely move until warmed up to about 75°F or more. Once energized, they begin hunting, establishing and maintaining territory and, when the time is right, mating. If you happen to see males bobbing their heads up and down vigorously and pushing their dewlaps (a fold of skin under the chin) out, you know there's some aggression going on, usually between two males, with the resident alpha defending his territory. If this display isn't enough, it can escalate into a full-scale brawl, which can result in serious injury or even death to one of the combatants. But usually, the Iguana is a pretty mellow creature, peacefully living on an abundant supply of leaves, fruits, berries, and flowers.

One of the coolest features of the iguana is the presence of a "third eye", not in the mystical or Hindi sense, but as an actual transparent membrane in the back of its head. More formally known as the parietal region, it looks like a translucent scale about 5mm wide above the center of

the iguana's head. While not able to "see" exactly, it can make out shadows and images cast by hawks and other predators. When alerted to this, the iguana turns its head and uses its real eyes to make the decision to flee, fight, or hang out. It's a unique early warning system that has much to do with the iguana's survival as a species.

The crafty reptile's other defenses are its coloration, which helps it blend into the surrounding forest, its long, whip-like tail, and the ability to leap off branches, dive into water and swim beneath the surface for some distance.

While you are exploring the country, you may come across an iguana sunning itself or diving into the water as your canoe passes. We hope you'll see more than just some lazy lizard lounging around, and appreciate that here is another example of nature's marvelous ability to adapt and evolve. And when you consider that he or she is just one of hundreds of thousands of crucial components to Belize's rainforest habitat, a habitat of amazing interdependence and diversity, we hope that you'll share our sense of never ending excitement and appreciation for the sheer elegance of our natural world.

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The Chef's Table – a decadent experience for your taste buds

A half mile north of San Pedro Town's bridge is a thatched-roof style restaurant and bar that has been generating quite the buzz. The chef in charge prepares exquisite, artfully presented dishes that explode with flavour. Yes, we're talking about Pirate's Treasure, in particular, the unique dining experience called the Chef's Table.

The unique nightly Chef's Table is exclusive and available only by reservations. It can serve up to a maximum of 17 people, but a minimum of four can also enjoy the delicious dining experience. While guests sip on refreshing cocktails, Chef Maresha Reid prepares all her recipes with quality ingredients in the open concept kitchen. Every night brings about a new three-course menu complete with appetizer, entrée, and main course – all beautifully presented. This experience is not just about eating out, it's an exquisite dining experience and whether or not you're a foodie, you can't miss this experience!

Guests can enjoy such delights like the Spider Crab Cakes: lightly pan-fried cakes made of fresh spider crab meat tossed with freshly chopped onions, cilantro, celery, and grated carrots. The cakes are served with dill aioli and topped with julienned citrusy jicama. Take advantage of the fact that Pirate's Treasure is one of the few restaurants offering Lionfish as a staple on its menu - and taste the Coconut Ginger Curry Lionfish! Served with roasted potato wedges, the spiced fish is so, so good! Who knew an invasive species could be so delectable? Hearty meat lovers can indulge in her fabulous thick-cut coconut husk smoked pork chops.



Guests get to watch Chef Maresha take the simplest of Belizean ingredients and turn them into beautiful dishes.



Cooked to smoky perfection, the chops are topped with sweet potato crisps and served alongside Caribbean Chaya simmered in fresh coconut milk and grilled mushrooms marinated in white wine. When in season, her baked lobster tails in a white wine sauce, garnished with caramelized hibiscus, green beans and sweetly glazed cinnamon carrots just caps off the night! But her repertoire extends beyond the lobster to feature seasonal dishes that are fresh, redolent with flavour and spices, and perfect under a thatched roof in the company of old and new friends.

Talk about a fun and unique experience! Groups, couples, all sorts can convene to taste Maresha's amazing food. Chef's Table reservations are required preferably by 3PM or even the day before; call (501)668-2156. Maresha is mindful of special requests, so upon making reservations, kindly inform of any allergies or special requests. Seating is at 6:45PM, and cooking starts at 7PM.

Pirate's Treasure's full menu is available daily at the restaurant from noon to 11PM, and you can just pop in for a few drinks and a quick nibble – no reservations required!

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Caye Boy: bringing island life to readers across the globe!

By Janelle Cowo



For those lucky to live in the coastal shores of Belize you know that the best adventures happen during childhood. Running around barefoot, both looking for and causing excitement and trouble, Belizean children live one day at a time. Now thanks to Jessica Retseck Wigh, everyone can enjoy the simple life of growing up in the Caribbean shore just by reading!

Jessica, who has been coming to Belize since 2002, compiled all her memories and experiences of Caye Caulker Village into a series of children's book. Titled "Caye Boy" readers join the everyday life of Gilford and Alvis as they race around their little island. "I just want to make children happy. When they read this I just want them to smile and want to read it over and over again. At the same time I want the books to celebrate the culture of living and growing up in Belize. I want to share that experience with people, whether they are here or abroad," said Jessica.

She started writing 2014 and by May 2014, Jessica had published the first book of the series: Caye Boy: Barefoot Adventures of an Island Child. In this book Gilford and his little brother Alvis explore the sand streets of their little island looking for barefoot adventures. "The first book was the basic idea of growing up in Belize. Their freedom and independence to explore their surroundings throughout the day. Living in an island in Belize is just a little slice of heaven," said Jessica.

In the second book, Caye Boy and Kite Day, Gilford and Alvis are super excited for Kite Day. But their kite gets stuck in a tree and they will need to recruit the help of their fellow r to get another kite. "In this book I wanted to bring about the concept that it takes a village to raise a child. This shows how important the extended family and local villagers are to each child. I framed it around Baron Bliss Day (Heroes and Benefactors Day) and the tradition of flying kites," said Jessica.

Jessica has submerged herself so much into the island life, that she even has two 'Caye Boys' of her own. "My husband and I

decided to make Caye Caulker out home. Our two children, a four-year-old and a six-year-old, were born and raised here in Belize. Once I had them, everything just made sense. I think locals and tourist love seeing this lifestyle of watching these children just having fun. And the book gives them an opportunity to take that experience home with them," said Jessica.

The books make for a perfect bed time story. It is colorfully illustrated with images that represent the essence of Belize. I have read them and I'm hooked on the series! Can't wait for Jessica to publish the third installment! Spoiler Alert: Caye Boy is going to the jungle!

Caye Boy is illustrated by Andrew Young and published by Little Blue House Publishing. The books are available at www.caye-boy.com and on Amazon for world-wide shipping. You can also get them across the country at these local retailers:

Belize City- Belize Gourmet Rum and Cakes and Moho Chocolate

Caye Caulker- Caye Caulker Plaza Hotel, Cayeboard Connection, Caribbean Colors Art Café, Island Link, Island Magic, Mirany's Gift Shop, RandOM Yoga, and Seaside Cabanas

Caye- Black Rock Lodge, Hidden Valley Inn, and Orange Gallery

San Pedro- Belize Arts Gallery, Moho Chocolate, Portofino Resort and Ramon's Village Resort

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Those elusive whale sharks

By Mary Gonzalez



The opportunity to get up close and personal with one of the world's largest fish, the whale shark, is one that many dream of. As we've told you before, we've tried our very best to catch them in action, but they've neglected to show up at the appointed time. That doesn't stop us from wanting to check them out in their natural habitat - no sirree!

The whale shark, *Rhincodon typus*, is by far the largest living non-mammal to ever inhabit the Earth. As the world's largest fish, it has a recorded length of 41.50 feet and a weight of more than 47,000 pounds! Those statistics sure gives new dimension to those tall fish tales, huh?! Despite all of those big numbers and their sheer size and volume, whale sharks are appropriately known as gentle giants – docile and frankly, aren't bothered by your swimming/snorkeling/diving nearby. We always caution that you shouldn't come too close – touching wildlife is a big no-no in our books. Besides, despite knowing their gentle nature, size can always keep us at bay!!

But the real question in our research about these docile giants is: 'Where do these giants come from?' Turns out, no-one really knows! In a 2013 National Geographic story written by Brian Handwerk, the mystery of where the sharks come from is never really a solved. In fact, their mating and birth rituals have never been observed!

These giant animals seemingly pop up out of nowhere, to feed and aggregate in over a dozen major feeding locations around the world: from Western Australia and Indonesia to Belize. The biggest number definitely has to be on the northeastern Yucatan Peninsula (Quintana Roo, Mexico) and as much as 800 of the beasts have been observed between May and September. The whale sharks show up, feed on the tiny plankton and small fish or eggs in the Caribbean waters, then boom, disappear for

another six months! (How can **we** get that kind of extended holiday?)

Tagging efforts, through whale shark research that was partially funded by a grant from the National Geographic Society has revealed their incredible journey through one mature and presumed pregnant female named Rio Lady. She was tagged in Mexico, after which her odyssey of 4,800 miles was observed with bated breath. For five months she swam, out between Brazil and Africa, passing the equator where her tag came off, leaving researchers with no more information on what she was up to beyond that point.

If anything, not knowing only leaves us more excited to see what scientists can come up with their research efforts. But I for one, will continue this (im)patient wait for their arrival to Gladden's Spit. Perhaps this time we can roll out the red carpet a bit. What can we do to ensure they show up for us? We promise to take flattering photos, all at the right angles and we won't even ask for their autograph, or stalk them (much) once they swim away from us...think that will work? :)



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