



# Spring Belize Style

February - April 2026

FREE

Vol. 12 #01

# From the Editor: Tamara Sniffin



## Moments That Make Belize Memorable

There is a special kind of magic in Belize, one that reveals itself when you dive in, get your hands a little dirty, dance under the moonlight, and celebrate alongside the people who call this place home. This issue is filled with stories that capture that energy, inviting you to experience Belize in unforgettable ways.

In San Pedro Town, creativity comes alive at The Bamboo Artist, where a hands-on bamboo art experience is shaped by its founder's remarkable journey. Born in Nigeria as a traditional woodworker, he evolved his craft to bamboo, embracing sustainability. Celebrated in Jamaica and recognized in the United States, his globally influenced work transforms a humble material into contemporary art rooted in culture and innovation.

When the full moon rises over the Caribbean, the vibe shifts from laid-back to electric. Moon Bar at Mangata Villas hosts one of Ambergris Caye's most memorable nights, where music, firelight, glowing cocktails, and warm sea breezes come together for a full moon celebration that feels uniquely island and irresistibly fun.

We also explore Easter in Belize, a season that beautifully balances tradition and tropical escape. From heartfelt religious observances to relaxed beach days and lively coastal gatherings, Easter offers travelers a front-row seat to Belize's rich cultural tapestry and welcoming spirit.

In the heart of the Cayo District, the Belize Natural History Archive offers a deeper look into the wildlife and ecosystems that define the country. More than a museum, it is a thoughtfully curated space where science, conservation, and storytelling converge, making it a must-see for those seeking a deeper understanding of Belize's natural world.

And then there is Carnaval in San Pedro! Colorful, energetic, and deeply rooted in community. What begins as playful fun unfolds into a celebration of identity, heritage, and shared pride, offering visitors a chance to experience one of the island's most vibrant traditions.

Together, these stories celebrate Belize at its best: creative, festive, soulful, and full of life. We hope they inspire you to explore, celebrate, and fall in love with our country. We welcome you to *My Beautiful Belize!*



*Welcome Message*  
Gualberto "Wally" Nuñez  
San Pedro Town Mayor

## Welcome to our beautiful island of Ambergris Caye, La Isla Bonita.

Whether you are visiting for the first time or returning to a place that feels like home, we are honored to share our island and our way of life with you. San Pedro is a community defined by its rich culture, resilient spirit, and the natural beauty that surrounds us.

The months of February, March, and April mark one of the most vibrant seasons on our island. San Pedro Carnaval fills our streets with color, music, and joy. It is an expression of our creativity and community pride. Visitors from near and far come seeking renewed energy and connection during Spring Break. As the season continues, Easter invites a time of reflection and faith, deeply rooted in community traditions that remain central to our cultural identity.

Throughout this busy and meaningful season, we continue working every day to improve the experience for both residents and visitors. From protecting our natural environment to strengthening public services, enhancing safety, managing traffic, and investing in infrastructure, our goal is to ensure that growth is responsible, inclusive, and sustainable.

We invite you to explore beyond our shores and experience the heart of San Pedro. Immerse yourself in our neighborhoods, traditions, and celebrations. Visitors are welcomed not just as guests, but as part of our extended family. Our culture is warm, our people are welcoming, and our island is open to all who seek meaningful and immersive experiences.

Thank you for choosing Ambergris Caye. We hope your stay is joyful, enriching, and unforgettable. We are glad to share Our Island, Our Home with everyone.

### About the Front Page

*Beach play day in San Pedro Town, on Ambergris Caye, sandy feet, and carefree fun. From splashing in the shallows to playing with friends by the shore, this is what growing up (and living) on the island looks like.*

## Where do you Read



**Dion Vansen**, reporter for *The San Pedro Sun*, took *My Beautiful Belize* along for the journey while visiting the world-famous Wrigley Field in Chicago, USA. Opened in 1914, Wrigley Field is one of the oldest and most beloved ballparks in the United States, home to the Chicago Cubs and renowned for its ivy-covered brick outfield walls, hand-operated scoreboard, and timeless charm that has made it an icon of American sports history.

### Jackson Hole, Wyoming

**Paul and Carrie Guschewsky** of Lander, Wyoming, joined by their furry travel companion, Parker, read *My Beautiful Belize* beneath a striking arch of elk antlers in iconic Town Square while exploring **Jackson Hole, Wyoming**. The elk antler arches that frame the four corners of this historic square are one of Jackson's most photographed landmarks: built from thousands of naturally shed elk antlers collected from the nearby National Elk Refuge.



*Have a great picture reading this publication? Send it to us at [hello@mybeautifulbelize.com](mailto:hello@mybeautifulbelize.com) to be featured!*

# Belize's Natural History Archive

## a Must-See in Cayo

By Tamara Sniffin



Located in Santa Elena Town in Belize's Cayo District, the Belize Natural History Archive offers visitors a compelling new way to understand the country's extraordinary biodiversity. Part museum, part scientific archive, and part storytelling space, it bridges the gap between what travelers see in Belize's wild places and the science that protects them.

What makes the Belize Natural History Archive unique is its scientific focus on natural history, presented in an accessible and engaging way. Rather than traditional museum displays, the Archive features carefully preserved specimens of Belizean wildlife, particularly birds, that highlight the country's diverse ecosystems. Each exhibit is designed to educate, spark curiosity, and deepen appreciation for the natural world.

Continued on Page 4



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# Belize's Natural History Archive

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The Archive was thoughtfully curated through years of fieldwork, research, and collaboration with conservation agencies and educators. All specimens are ethically and legally obtained, with a strong emphasis on education, conservation, and respect for wildlife. The goal is not only to display Belize's natural heritage but also to explain how ecosystems function and why protecting them matters.

At the heart of the Archive is its curator, Michael Penn, a respected naturalist and ornithologist whose work has significantly advanced understanding of Belize's birdlife and biodiversity. His expertise and passion are evident throughout the exhibits, which pair scientific accuracy with clear, engaging interpretation for visitors of all ages.

Continued on Page 4

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## Belize's Natural History Archive

Continued from Page 4

For travelers exploring the Cayo District, the Belize Natural History Archive is a perfect complement to jungle hikes, river adventures, and wildlife tours. It offers valuable context for the animals and landscapes encountered outdoors, helping visitors see Belize not only as a beautiful destination but as a living, interconnected ecosystem.

Whether you are a nature enthusiast, a family traveling with curious kids, or simply someone eager to learn more about Belize beyond the surface, the Belize Natural History Archive is a must-see destination. It is an inspiring space that celebrates knowledge, conservation, and Belize's remarkable natural story.

The Archive is open Tuesday through Saturday from noon to 6PM, and Sunday from noon to 4 PM; it is closed on Mondays. For more information, please visit <https://belizenaturalhistoryarchive.com>.

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# FROM BAMBOO TO ART: A HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN SAN PEDRO

By Tamara Sniffin



Located in the heart of San Pedro Town, The Bamboo Artist is one of Ambergris Caye's newest and most creative experiences. More than a gallery showcasing distinctive bamboo artworks and custom framing services, The Bamboo Artist also offers an engaging, story-driven art class. The hands-on experience is rooted in sustainability, culture, and the life's work of a highly respected international artist.

The Bamboo Art Class begins not with tools but with context. Guests are welcomed by Nicole, the wife of artist Omo Otaylor, who opens the session with an introduction to bamboo's sustainability and the powerful story behind her husband's work. Bamboo, she explains, is fast-growing, renewable, and deeply symbolic of resilience and adaptability, qualities that mirror Omo's artistic journey.

Born and raised in Nigeria, Omo began his career as a traditional woodworker, mastering form and technique with natural materials. Over time, his practice evolved as he moved from wood to bamboo, driven by environmental awareness and a desire to explore new creative possibilities. His talent was recognized during a decade in Jamaica, where his bamboo art was celebrated for its refined craftsmanship, creative innovation, and strong cultural identity. His journey eventually led him to the United States, where his reputation continued to grow, earning him recognition as an artist who transforms a humble, sustainable material into contemporary works with global influence.

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Following the introduction, the class moves into a relaxed, hands-on session suitable for all skill levels. Led by Omo, participants choose from four design options, select pre-cut bamboo pieces with naturally varied textures and tones, and begin assembling their artwork. With clear, step-by-step guidance, guests learn simple shaping, assembly, and finishing techniques. Light refreshments and drinks enhance the easygoing, social atmosphere, where conversation and creativity unfold naturally.

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Continued from Page 7



What makes this experience truly special is its depth. Guests are not simply making art; they are connected to a living story of sustainability, cultural exchange, and artistic evolution. At the end of the class, participants leave with a handcrafted bamboo artwork ready to travel, along with a deeper appreciation for bamboo as a material and for Omo Otaylor as an artist.

As a new business and experience on the island, The Bamboo Artist is already setting itself apart. For visitors to Ambergris Caye seeking something creative and unmistakably unique, it is a must-do addition to your island itinerary. The gallery is open 9AM to 6PM, Monday through Saturday. The two-hour classes are offered daily at 9AM and 3PM. For more information and to register, please visit <https://bambooartist.com/a-taste-of-bamboo/> or their Facebook page @ thebambooartist.

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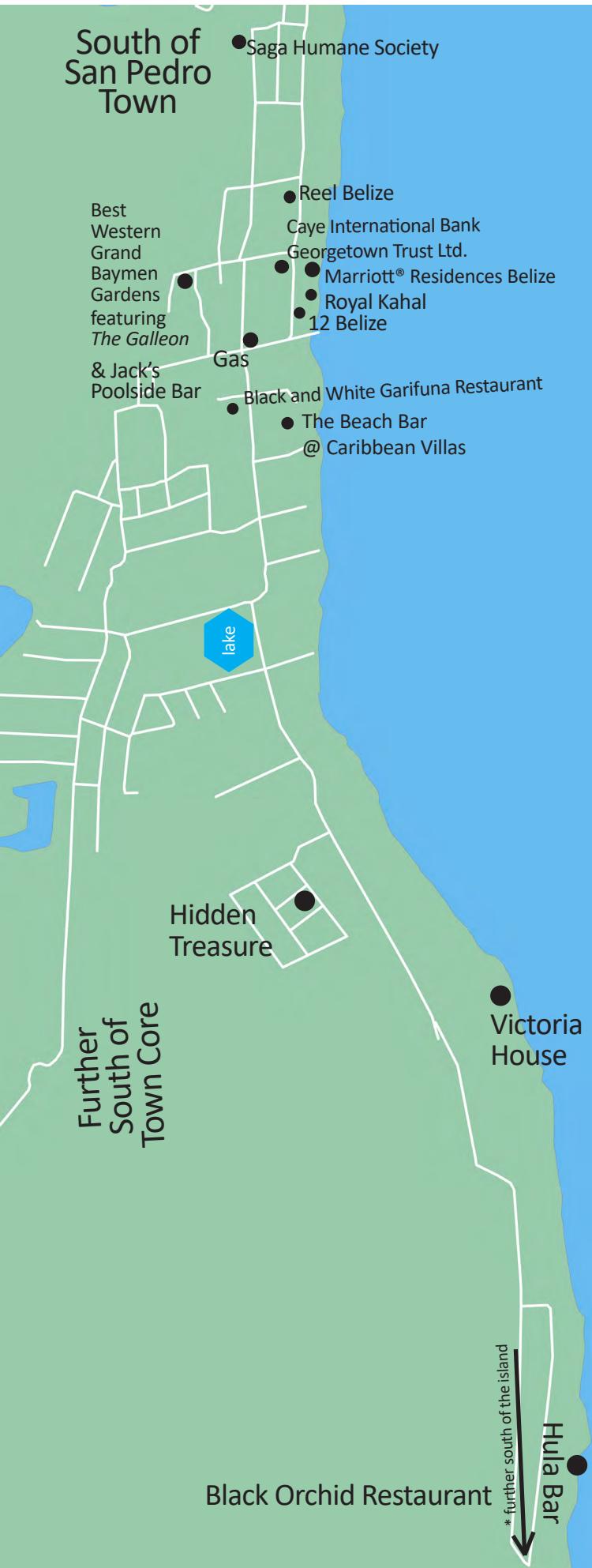
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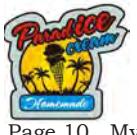
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**ACES Wildlife Rescue:** Don't take matters into your own hands. Call 623-7920 for wildlife conflicts and rescue.

**AI-Anon Meetings:** Wednesdays, 5:30PM, SP Catholic Church Hall [islabonitaalanon@yahoo.com](mailto:islabonitaalanon@yahoo.com)

**Ambergris Caye Masonic Lodge:** [ambergriscayemasoniclodge@gmail.com](mailto:ambergriscayemasoniclodge@gmail.com) 672-2265

**Belize Hotel Association:** 223-0669, [bha@btl.net](mailto:bha@btl.net)

**Belize Tourism Board:** 227-2419

**Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA):** 227-5717

**Dr. Otto Rodriguez San Pedro Poly-Clinic II:** 226-2536

**Emergency Veterinarian care:** 610-3647

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**Island Emergency Services:** Certified medical emergency service. Call 615-2998

**Narcotics Anonymous:** By request at 623-0316.

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**San Pedro Police Department:** 206-2022

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# MORE THAN PAINT AND MUSIC:

**WHAT CARNIVAL MEANS TO**

# San Pedro

by Janelle Gonzalez



For anyone growing up in San Pedro Town, Carnaval simply arrived, and whether you planned for weeks or got caught up on the first day, it was an iconic island tradition to partake in. As children, we waited eagerly for the days when the sandy streets became playgrounds of laughter and color. Armed with bottles of paint, we chased one another through town, knowing full well that by the end of the day, no one would make it home clean. It was messy, carefree, and unforgettable.

Back then, Carnaval felt like pure fun. Once school was out, the rules relaxed, and the whole town became our stage. We didn't think much about where the tradition came from or why it mattered. We just knew it was our time to let loose before Lent began.

As I grew older, my understanding of Carnaval deepened. What once seemed like playful chaos revealed itself as something far more meaningful. Carnaval in San Pedro is not just about paint and parties; it is about identity. It is a tradition passed down through generations, shaped by history, community, and pride. The evolution from simple paint play to organized comparsas reflects how the celebration—and the town itself—has grown.

Today, the comparsas are the heartbeat of Carnaval. Months of preparation go into the costumes, choreography, and music. Each group tells a story, blending creativity with cultural expression. The paint may still be there, but it now shares space with structured performances that showcase San Pedro's talent, creativity, and unity.

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## San Pedro Carnaval Continued from Page 13

What makes Carnaval especially meaningful is its warm welcome. Locals and visitors celebrate side by side, and everyone is invited to join the fun. For travelers planning a visit, this year's Carnaval will run from February 15 to February 17, offering a front-row seat to one of San Pedro's most vibrant cultural celebrations.

Visitors are encouraged to participate, with respect for the tradition and the community. Wear clothes you don't mind getting painted, use only washable paint, and always ask before painting someone. Be mindful of children, elders, and those who may be observing rather than participating. Most importantly, embrace the spirit of the celebration.

In San Pedro, Carnaval is more than a celebration; it is our identity, proudly shared with everyone who comes to experience it. Remember, Carnaval always returns. If you miss it in 2026, San Pedro will be waiting to welcome you in 2027.

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## EASTER IN BELIZE

Where Tradition Meets Island Vibes

By Janelle Gonzalez

Easter in Belize is more than a long holiday weekend—it's a season of movement, meaning, and memorable moments. Across the country, communities mark the occasion in diverse ways, blending religious observance, family traditions, and festive beach culture. For travelers, it's one of the best times of year to explore Belize, with each destination offering a distinct Easter experience shaped by its people and surroundings.

### Caye Caulker: A Go-Slow Easter Escape

At the opposite end of the spectrum is Caye Caulker, where Easter unfolds at a gentler pace. True to its "Go Slow" motto, the island offers a laid-back holiday of snorkeling trips, beach naps, casual cookouts, and sunset views. Instead of large parties, you'll find easy-going gatherings and barefoot dining by the water. It's an ideal Easter destination for couples, solo travelers, and anyone looking to unplug and enjoy the simple pleasures of island life.



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Iguana Reef Inn, Caye Caulker



Continued on Page 16

# Easter in Belize Continued from Page 15



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## **Placencia: One Glorious Beach Party**

If Easter for you means sun, sound, and social energy, Placencia is the place to be. The southern peninsula is famous for its lively Easter weekend, featuring beach parties, DJ sets, live music, and packed seaside venues. Visitors can expect daytime lounging that easily turns into nighttime celebrations, all set against the backdrop of the Caribbean Sea. Placencia's walkable village, beachfront resorts, and relaxed yet festive atmosphere make it a favorite among travelers looking to celebrate Easter with a vibrant coastal twist.



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### Benque Viejo del Carmen: Easter Rooted in the Catholic Faith

For a deeply cultural and spiritual experience, Benque Viejo del Carmen stands out. This western border town is widely known for its traditional Easter observances, especially on Good Friday. Processions and reenactments of the Passion of Christ bring the entire community together, creating a powerful, emotional atmosphere. Visitors are welcome to observe and participate respectfully, gaining insight into Belize's strong religious traditions and the role faith continues to play in daily life.

### Ambergris Caye: Where Easter Balances Tradition and Island Fun

Blending reflection with celebration, Ambergris Caye offers a little of everything during Easter. Church services, family traditions, and reflective moments remain central, while afternoons often shift toward beach time and social gatherings. A popular Easter hotspot is Secret Beach, where calm waters, music, and relaxed beach vibes create a chill party atmosphere. Whether you prefer a quiet morning or a lively afternoon, the island offers balance.

From beach parties to sacred processions, Easter in Belize beautifully reflects the country's rich diversity and vibrant spirit. Wherever you spend the holiday, you'll find a destination that invites you to celebrate, reflect, and connect—always the Belize way. Easter weekend runs from April 3 to April 5, 2026, making it the perfect time to experience tradition, beach vibes, or a little of both.



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By Tamara Sniffin

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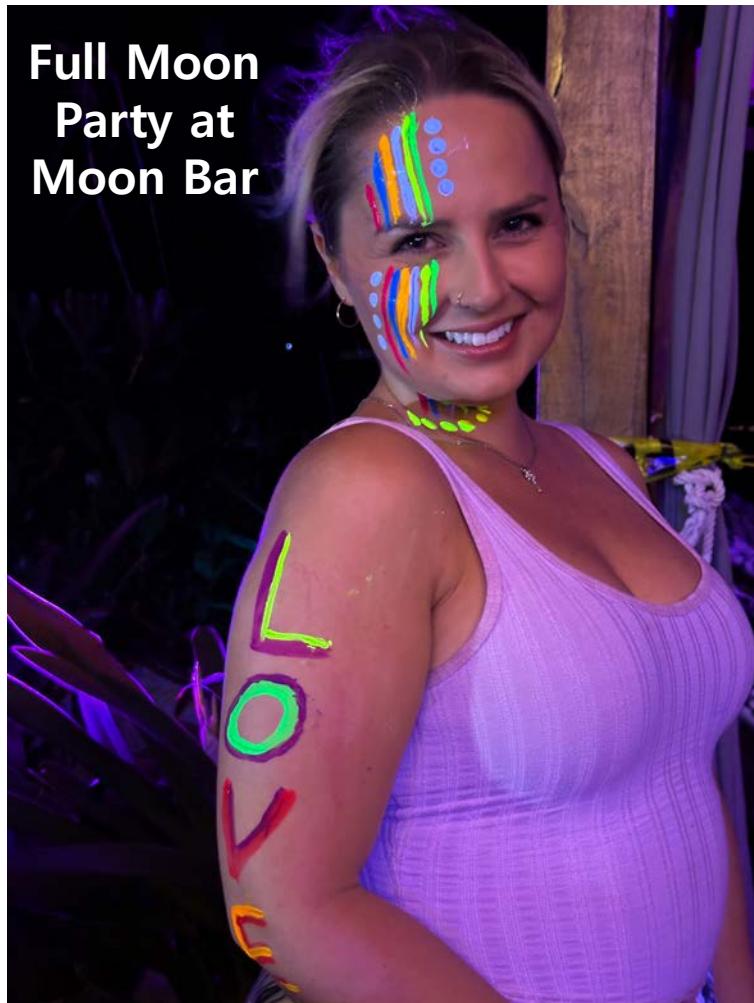


When the moon rises full over the Caribbean Sea, Moon Bar at Mangata Villas becomes one of Ambergris Caye's most memorable nighttime experiences. Known for its relaxed, adults-only beachfront vibe, Moon Bar turns up the energy once a month with a Full Moon Party that is festive, social, and perfectly island-paced.

As evening settles in, guests gather along the beach as a DJ or live music sets an easygoing soundtrack. Fire features flicker along the beach, cocktails flow, and the atmosphere feels celebratory without losing its laid-back charm.

The highlight comes as the full moon rises over the horizon, casting silver light across the sea and drawing everyone's attention to the water. It is a shared moment of awe, followed by laughter, music, and conversation under the stars.

## Full Moon Party at Moon Bar



Adding to the fun is glow-in-the-dark body painting, a favorite feature of the night. Guests can decorate their arms, shoulders, or faces with neon designs that come alive after dark, creating a playful, luminous scene as people dance, mingle, and move along the beach. The glowing artwork looks especially striking under the moonlight and firelight, making the night feel a little magical.

The Full Moon Party also includes moon-inspired cocktail specials, Moon Bar's full menu of favorites, including wood-fired pizzas and beach-friendly bites, and plenty of lounge seating to relax or dance at your own pace.

Watching a full moon rise over the Caribbean is a classic island moment. Experiencing it with music, glowing paint, and good company at Moon Bar makes it unforgettable, and a must-do evening for visitors to Ambergris Caye.

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## WHAT WE DO

At CIB, we provide a wide range of financial services to help our clients manage their money and achieve their financial goals. Our services include private and corporate banking, investments, international wire transfers, and mortgage loans for properties in Belize, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.

## CONVENIENT

With a wide range of services, including mortgage loans, wire transfers, debit cards, term deposits and the option to bank in multiple currencies, Caye International Bank is a convenient option for those who want to explore international banking.

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