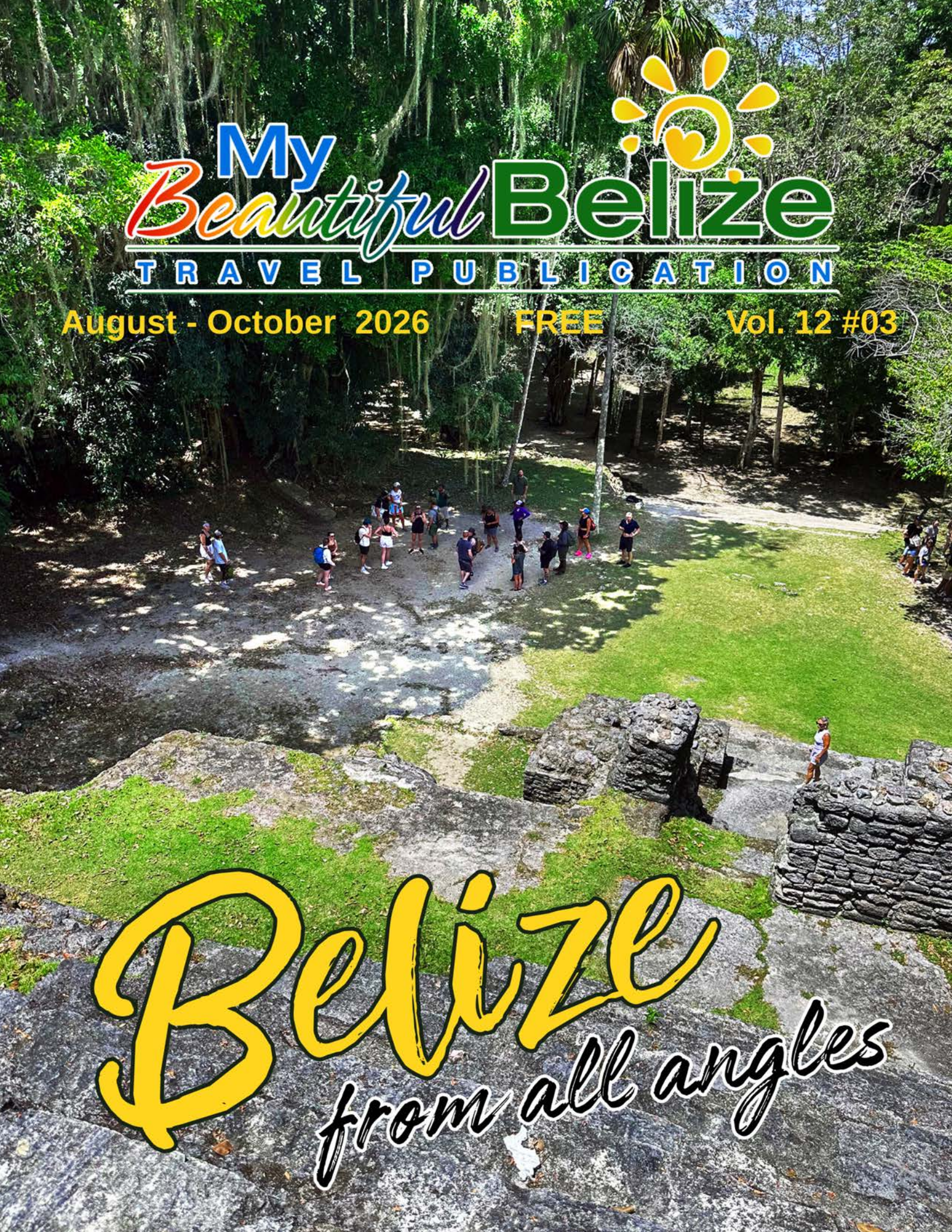




My Beautiful Belize

TRAVEL PUBLICATION

August - October 2026

FREE

Vol. 12 #03

Belize

from all angles

From the Editor: Tamara Sniffin



On assignment at
Victoria House

Seeing Belize Differently

One of the greatest joys of living in Belize is that no matter how many places I visit or stories I write, this beautiful country always finds a way to surprise me. Every journey offers a new perspective, every conversation uncovers another story, and every adventure reminds me why I fell in love with Belize in the first place.

That sense of discovery inspired this issue's theme, *Belize From All Angles*.

It's easy to think we know a destination, especially one we've visited before. But Belize has a remarkable way of revealing itself in unexpected ways. Sometimes it's found deep within the rainforest, where the ancient Maya city of Lamanai rises above the jungle canopy after an unforgettable journey along the New River. Other times, it's discovered while strolling through locally owned shops, meeting the friendly faces behind Ambergris Caye's businesses, or spending a morning with the lovable residents of Saga Humane Society. Every experience offers a new way to connect with Belize.

Our *Beyond the Beach* series continues to showcase experiences that reveal a different side of island life, from discovering why shopping on Ambergris Caye is about more than just souvenirs, to sharing meaningful moments with the island's four-legged friends. Elsewhere in this issue, we explore the beauty and importance of Belize's coastal ecosystems in *The Secret Trees of Paradise*, celebrate romance and luxury at Victoria House Resort & Spa's stunning Honeymoon Suite, and journey to one of the country's most remarkable archaeological treasures, Lamanai.

As September approaches, Belize prepares to celebrate 45 years of independence. It's the perfect time to experience the country's vibrant culture, traditions, music, food, and the incredible pride of its people. In *Look at Me. I Am Belize at 45*, we invite you to celebrate like a Belizean and discover the spirit that makes this country so special.

Whether you're planning your first visit or your fiftieth, I hope this issue inspires you to slow down, look a little closer, and embrace experiences that go beyond the expected. Because Belize isn't defined by a single destination or a single adventure, it's a collection of stories, landscapes, cultures, and unforgettable moments that can only be appreciated when you see it from every angle.

However you choose to experience it, 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.

As another season unfolds on Ambergris Caye, we are delighted to welcome you to our home. Whether you are visiting for the first time or returning to a place that feels like home, we hope you enjoy the warmth of our people, the beauty of our island, and the unique experiences that make San Pedro special.

Our island life continues to follow the rhythm of the seasons. Across the Caribbean, communities are managing the arrival of sargassum, and Ambergris Caye is no exception. Behind the scenes, dedicated teams work every day to keep our beaches welcoming while continuing long-term restoration efforts that strengthen the health and resilience of our coastline. We appreciate the understanding and support of residents, businesses, and visitors as we continue responding to this regional challenge together.

We also remain in the heart of hurricane season. While we always hope for calm weather, our community continues to prepare through careful planning, strong partnerships, and the dedication of emergency responders, volunteers, and local organizations working together to keep our island safe and ready.

Soon, we will come alive with the vibrant colors, music, and traditions of the September Celebrations as we proudly commemorate our nation's Independence. It's one of the most exciting times of the year and a wonderful opportunity for visitors to experience the culture, heritage, and community spirit that define our country. As the celebrations continue into October, we invite you to join us in celebrating not only Belize's history, but also the people and traditions that make our island so memorable.

Thank you for choosing Ambergris Caye. We hope your visit is filled with meaningful experiences, lasting memories, and a deeper appreciation for the community that proudly calls this island home.

Welcome to Our Island, Our Home.

Merida,
Yucatan, Mexico



Where do you Read



Dion Vansen, from San Pedro Town, Belize, enjoys a copy of *My Beautiful Belize* while visiting the world-famous **Panama Canal**. Opened in 1914, this remarkable engineering marvel connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, allowing thousands of ships to transit between them each year and dramatically reducing travel time for global trade.

Jerry and Tiena Sniffin, from California, USA, take *My Beautiful Belize* to **Paris, France**, posing in front of the world-famous **Moulin Rouge**. Opened in 1889 in the heart of Montmartre, the iconic cabaret is celebrated as the birthplace of the modern French can-can and remains one of Paris's most recognizable landmarks.

Paris, France



Have a great picture reading this publication? Send it to us at hello@mybeautifulbelize.com to be featured!

...a Romantic Island Escape

to The Honeymoon Suite at Victoria House Resort & Spa



Located just two miles south of San Pedro Town on the picturesque shores of Ambergris Caye, Victoria House Resort & Spa captures the laid-back elegance that has made Belize's largest island one of the Caribbean's most sought-after destinations. Surrounded by swaying

palms, white sand beaches, and the turquoise waters of the Caribbean Sea, Ambergris Caye is renowned for its easygoing island lifestyle, exceptional dining, and world-class access to the Belize Barrier Reef, offering unforgettable adventures both above and below the water.



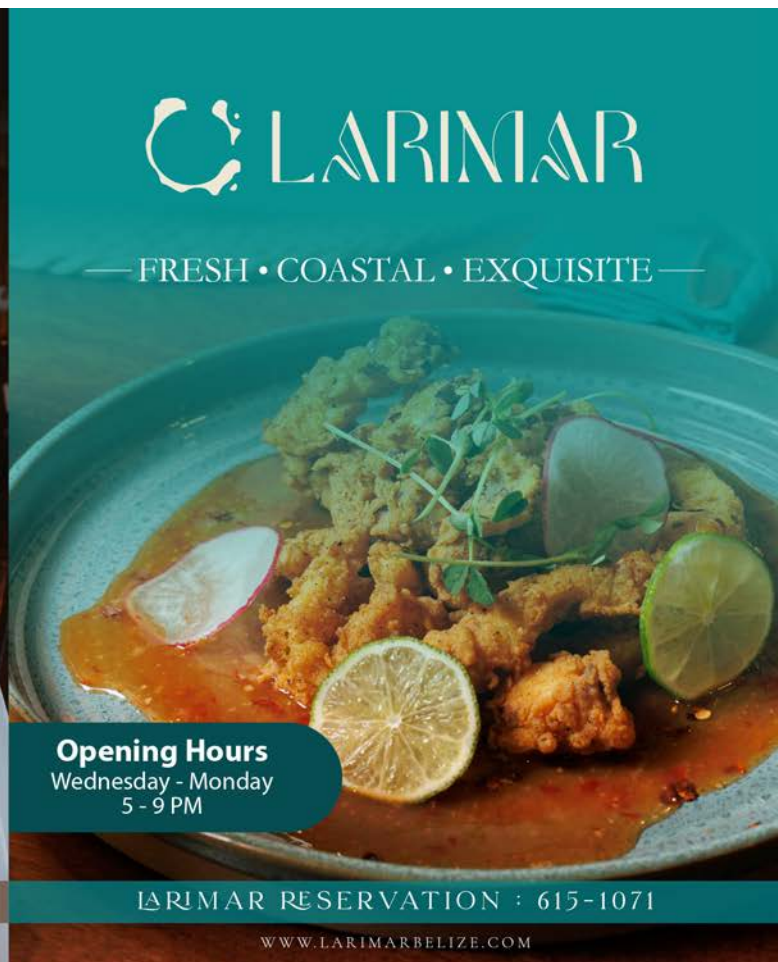


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For more than four decades, Victoria House Resort & Spa has been synonymous with island paradise. Established in 1980 as an intimate beachfront retreat, the award-winning resort has earned international acclaim for its gracious hospitality, luxurious accommodations, and idyllic setting. Today, guests enjoy beautifully appointed accommodations, two swimming pools, a full-service spa, a PADI dive center, personalized concierge services, and one of Ambergris Caye's premier dining experiences, where gourmet cuisine and beachfront ambiance create unforgettable moments.

Known as the Honeymoon Suite, the Rainforest Suite is one of Victoria House's most romantic accommodations. This charming standalone beachfront villa sits just 50 feet from the water's edge, offering privacy, luxury, and uninterrupted Caribbean views. Its spacious wraparound veranda, complete with chaise lounges and a hammock, invites guests to sip morning coffee while watching the sun rise over the Caribbean or unwind to the gentle rhythm of the waves.

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Inside, the 650-square-foot, air-conditioned suite blends timeless Belizean elegance with tropical charm. A handcrafted four-poster mahogany king bed serves as the centerpiece, while colorful jungle-inspired frescoes, hand-painted by celebrated Belizean artist Papo, reveal Belize's lush landscapes and vibrant wildlife, giving the suite a distinctive sense of place. Enhanced in late 2025 with the addition of a private plunge pool, the suite offers an even more luxurious retreat for couples seeking romance and relaxation.

Thoughtful amenities, including complimentary continental breakfast, plush bathrobes, premium linens, free Wi-Fi, bicycles and kayaks, a mini-bar, decorative bed netting, and a private veranda, ensure every comfort is at your fingertips. Whether celebrating a honeymoon, anniversary, or simply escaping for a few days together, The Honeymoon Suite offers the perfect blend of privacy, barefoot luxury, and the legendary hospitality that has made Victoria House one of Belize's most iconic resorts.

For more information about Victoria House Resort & Spa, to explore its accommodations, indulge in exceptional dining and spa experiences, or book your own island escape, visit www.victoria-house.com, email reservations@victoria-house.com, or call +501-226-2067.



By Tamara Sniffin

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Lamanai

*Where the journey is
part of the adventure*

By Tamara Sniffin

Some Maya sites are destinations. Lamanai is an adventure.

Long before the first temple rises above the jungle canopy, visitors begin an experience unlike any other in Belize. Whether arriving by road, by river, or a combination of both, the journey is woven into the story of this remarkable ancient city. Winding through northern Belize's countryside, quiet villages, and the wildlife-rich New River, the route offers an unforgettable introduction to one of the country's most extraordinary archaeological treasures.

The logo for Corona del Mar San Pedro, featuring a stylized yellow sun or flower above blue waves, with the text "CORONA del MAR" and "SAN PEDRO" below.

A smartphone screen displaying a hotel booking app. The app shows the "Corona Del Mar Hotel" with a 4.1 rating, a photo of the hotel, and buttons for "CALL", "DIRECTIONS", "WHATSAPP", "SHARE", and "CHECK AVAILABILITY".

WHERE
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POOL

An oval-shaped inset image showing a beach with lounge chairs, palm trees, and the ocean.

BEACH VIEW

www.coronadelmarhotelbelize.com

For many visitors, the river journey becomes a highlight. Cruising along the tranquil New River offers a front-row seat to Belize's incredible biodiversity. Crocodiles bask along the banks, turtles slip beneath the water's surface, iguanas lounge in the treetops, and lucky travelers may even spot a manatee. Kingfishers dart across the water while herons, egrets, and jacanas patrol the shoreline. Then comes the deep, resonating call of the howler monkey, echoing through the rainforest and building anticipation for what lies ahead.

Continued on Page 8



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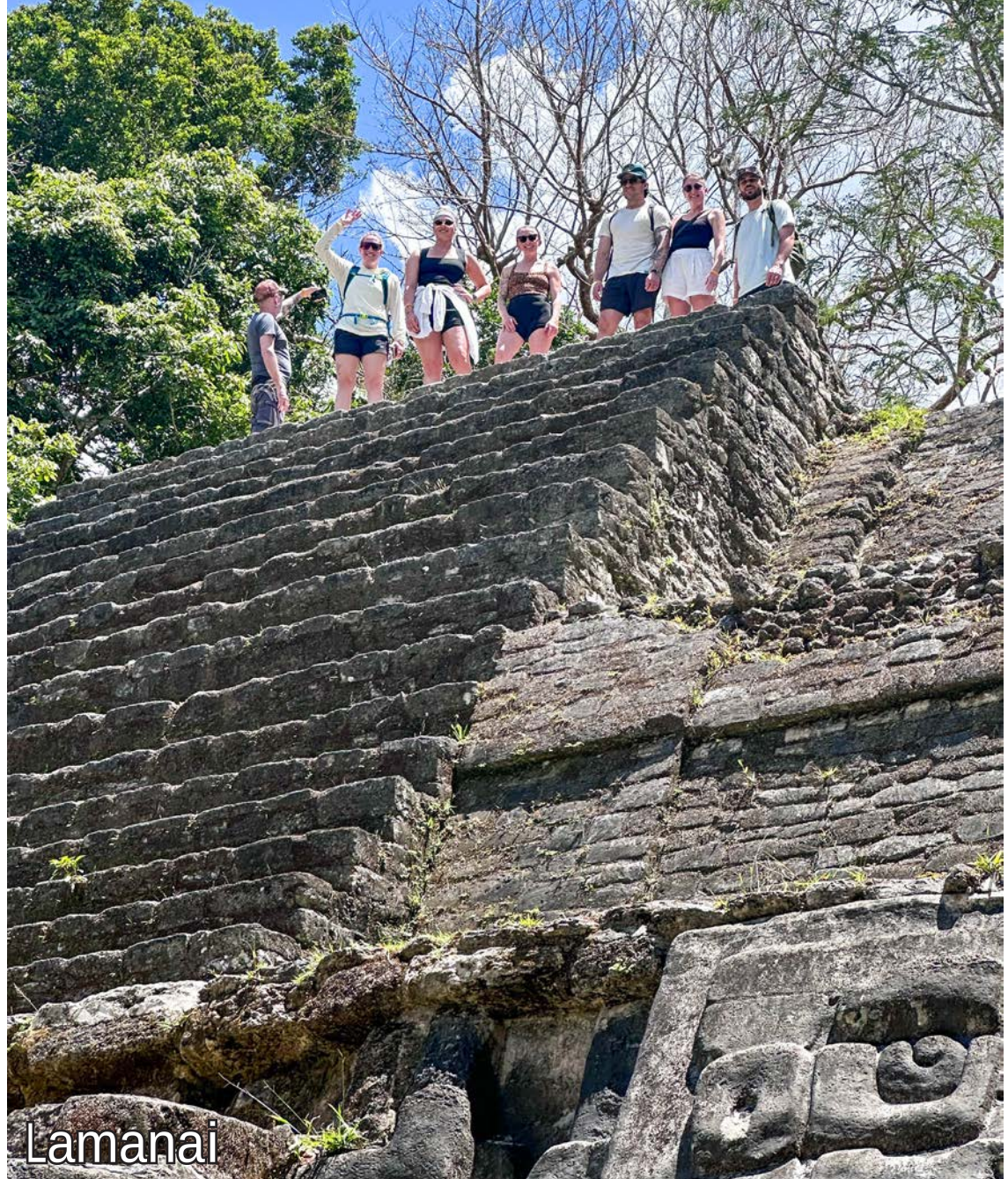
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Lamanai

Suddenly, the jungle parts.

Towering stone temples emerge from the forest, revealing Lamanai, one of Belize's oldest and longest continuously occupied Maya cities. Meaning "Submerged Crocodile" in the Maya language, Lamanai flourished for more than 3,000 years. Unlike many Maya centers abandoned centuries before European arrival, it remained inhabited well into the Spanish colonial period, creating a fascinating blend of Maya history and colonial heritage found nowhere else in Belize.

Today, visitors begin their exploration at the site's modern Visitor Center, where engaging exhibits, artifacts, and interpretive displays provide valuable insight into the people who once called Lamanai home. The center offers historical context before guests set off along the jungle trails to explore the reserve.

Walking through Lamanai feels different from visiting many archaeological sites. Here, the rainforest remains very much alive. Massive trees

shade ancient plazas, orchids cling to towering trunks, butterflies drift through sunlit clearings, and spider monkeys often swing overhead. The sounds of tropical birds and howler monkeys replace city noise, creating an atmosphere that feels remarkably unchanged through the centuries.

Among the site's most impressive structures is the High Temple, where those willing to climb its steep stone staircase are rewarded with sweeping views across the surrounding rainforest. Nearby, the iconic Mask Temple, the Jaguar Temple, ceremonial plazas, the remains of a Spanish colonial church, and a nineteenth-century sugar mill tell the story of a city that continued to evolve long after the height of the Maya civilization.

Lamanai's magic lies not only in its temples, but in the seamless connection between history and nature. From the unforgettable journey to the awe of standing among ancient monuments embraced by rainforest, Lamanai captures the very essence of Belize—wild, timeless, and unforgettable.

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The Palmilla Restaurant at Victoria House - Romantic and comfortable ambiance, serving a unique mix of island seafood and continental cuisine. Admiral Nelson Bar is beachside-casual, offering breakfast, lunch, and dinner with magnificent views. Reservations recommended: 226-2067



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El Fogon Restaurant - "The Firehearth," located in the heart of downtown, specializing in authentic Belizean cuisine. Our menu consists of a diverse selection of dishes that represent our Belizean culture. Air conditioning. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook at @elfogonbelize. Tel +501-673-2121.



Paradise Cream - Paradise Cream Parlor offers its customers a variety of over 30 flavors of homemade ice cream. Open Daily, 11am - 9:30pm; TEL: 501-226-5959



SP BTIA Tourism Information Center – Hosted by the Belize Tourism Industry Association San Pedro Chapter, providing information on all things tourism on Ambergris Caye and beyond. On Almond Street, next to the Artisan Market. <https://www.facebook.com/spbtatic/> for hours.



The Cork & Cooperage - The only Wine and Bourbon Bar in San Pedro focusing on premium, current vintage, New World Wines and Spirits. On Pescador Drive across from Caramba in the center of town. Open 10am-10pm daily. Facebook. [com/corkandcooperage](https://www.facebook.com/corkandcooperage)



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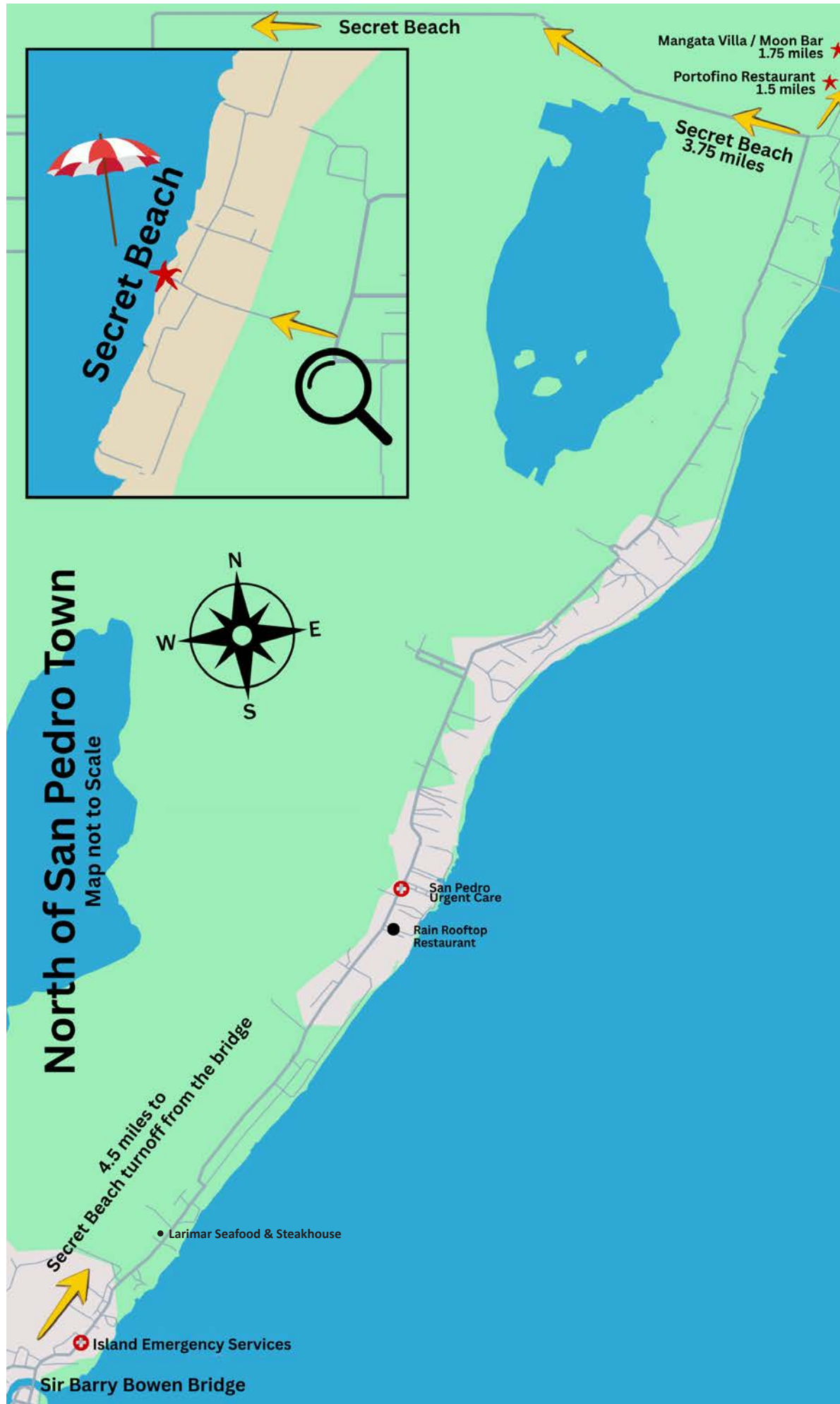
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by Valentine Rosado

A Resilience by Nature Story

Every paradise has a story. Ours begins in an unexpected place.

Visitors come for the crystal clear waters, the barrier reef, the sea turtles, the rays, and for the best experience nature can offer. Yet few realize that this story doesn't begin on the reef. It begins in a forest of tangled trees quietly growing where land meets the sea.

Those forests are mangroves, the secret trees of paradise.

To many visitors, they are simply part of the scenery. A blur outside the path of a boat or golf cart on the way to somewhere else. Yet beneath their tangled roots, one of nature's most remarkable stories is unfolding.

Continued on Page 14



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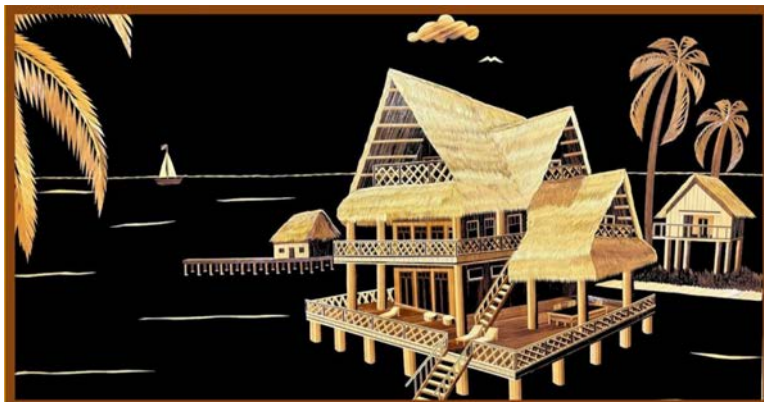
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The Secret Trees of Paradise

Continued from Page 13



Long before fish weave through gardens of corals or lobsters roam the reef, many spend the earliest and most vulnerable stage of their lives hidden among the mangroves. Protected from predators, they grow stronger before venturing into the open sea. In many ways, the reef begins here.

Mangroves also guard our shoreline. Their roots absorb wave energy, reduce erosion, and help protect our communities during storms. They are the world's most important blue carbon ecosystem, storing extraordinary amounts of carbon above and below the water. These quiet forests are not only protecting Belize, but they are also helping to heal the planet.

Belize is fortunate. We still have extensive mangrove forests, something many countries can no longer say. That means we still have an opportunity to protect what remains.

As tourism continues to grow, so does the demand for coastal development. Too often, mangroves are cleared to make way for bigger resorts, even though they quietly support the reefs, beaches, and marine life that visitors have come to experience.

It doesn't have to be that way.

Thoughtful development can work with nature rather than replace it. Around the world, exceptional destinations are proving that thriving tourism and healthy ecosystems can exist together. Belize has every opportunity to do the same.

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Visitors have more influence than they may realize.

Every place you choose to stay, every business you support, and every experience you recommend helps shape the future of the places you love. By supporting businesses that value Belize's natural environment, visitors help send a powerful message: the very nature they came to experience is worth protecting.

The next time you pass a stand of mangroves, pause for a moment.

You might discover that one of our greatest treasures has been standing quietly at water's edge all along.



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Beyond the Beach

by Tamara Sniffin

The beach may be what first draws visitors to Ambergris Caye, but some of the island's most memorable discoveries happen beyond the shoreline. Our Beyond the Beach series continues with two features that invite you to experience the island in a different way.

Discover 12 Belize, where shopping becomes an experience, and every carefully curated item celebrates Belizean creativity and craftsmanship. Then, spend a heartwarming morning with the four-legged residents of Saga Humane Society, where a few hours walking dogs or cuddling cats offer a meaningful way to give back while creating unforgettable vacation memories. Together, these stories showcase another side of Ambergris Caye, one filled with local connections, compassion, and authentic island experiences.

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SCAN THE QR

Shopping on Ambergris Caye can be much more than picking up a souvenir; it can be an opportunity to take home a genuine piece of Belize. At 12 Belize, every item on the shelves tells a local story because everything in the boutique is proudly made in Belize.

Now at its beautiful new location at Corona Del Mar, on Coconut Drive, 12 Belize is a celebration of Belizean creativity and craftsmanship. The boutique showcases an ever-growing collection of products created exclusively by local artisans, makers, and small businesses from across the country. Founded by Lara Goldman, 12 Belize was built on the idea that visitors should have a place to discover authentic, high-quality Belizean products while directly supporting the people who make them.

Browse handcrafted jewelry, leather goods, ceramics, woodwork, gourmet foods, spices, hot sauces, coffee, natural bath and body products, candles, artwork, books, home décor, and so much more. Every purchase supports Belizean entrepreneurs and provides visitors with unique keepsakes that reflect the country's culture, talent, and entrepreneurial spirit.

Looking for an experience as memorable as the shopping? 12 Belize has added a unique activity to its offerings with the new Passports & Prosecco class. Guests are invited to sip a glass of prosecco while designing and personalizing their own Belize passport cover—a fun, relaxed experience that's perfect for couples, friends, families, or solo travelers looking for a creative vacation memory they'll use.

Whether you're searching for the perfect gift, a handcrafted reminder of your Belize adventure, or simply want to support local businesses, a visit to 12 Belize is a rewarding stop beyond the beach. It's a place where every purchase has a story, every product is made with pride, and every visitor leaves with a little more of Belize than they arrived with.

For more information: Visit 12 Belize at Corona Del Mar, Coconut Drive, San Pedro, or follow them on social media to learn more about their products, workshops, and special events.



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Spend a Morning with Ambergris Caye's Four-Legged Friends

Missing your pets while vacationing in Belize? If you're looking for a meaningful way to spend a few hours beyond the beach, consider volunteering at the Saga Humane Society on Ambergris Caye. Whether you're a dog lover, a cat fan, or simply enjoy spending time with animals, Saga offers visitors a rewarding opportunity to make a difference while getting their furry friend fix.

Founded in 1999, Saga Humane Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of Ambergris Caye's dogs and cats through rescue, rehabilitation, adoption, education, and community veterinary programs. Located just south of San Pedro Town, the shelter welcomes short-term volunteers, making it easy for visitors to lend a helping hand, even if they're only on the island for a few days.

One of the most popular ways to volunteer is by taking one of Saga's adoptable dogs for a walk. It's a wonderful opportunity for the dogs to enjoy exercise, fresh air, and socialization while giving volunteers the chance to explore the neighborhood with a loyal companion by their side. Cat lovers can spend time in Saga's brand-new cattery outside, where cuddles, playtime, and companionship help socialize the resident cats and kittens while brightening their day and yours.

Every visit, walk, and cuddle helps improve the animals' well-being and increases their chances of finding homes forever. It's a simple yet memorable way to give back to the island while creating a special vacation experience you'll never forget.

Saga Humane Society is located on Seagrape Drive, just south of San Pedro Town. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, visit www.sagahumanesociety.org, email info@sagahumanesociety.org, or stop by the shelter during your stay. Your vacation could make a lifelong difference for a homeless pet.



Celebrate September Like a Belizean

Look at me.
I am Belize at 45

If you've ever wondered when Belize truly comes alive, the answer is simple—September. This year's national theme, "Look At Me. I Am Belize at 45," invites locals and visitors alike to celebrate a country built on unity, diversity, and a vibrant cultural heritage as Belize proudly approaches its 45th year of Independence.

For the entire month, the Jewel transforms into one big celebration. Every municipality proudly dresses in red, white, and blue, the sound of drums and soca fills the air, and every corner offers a chance to experience authentic Belizean culture. It's the perfect time to discover not only the country's breathtaking landscapes but also the warm spirit of its people.

September also honors Belize's rich history. The Battle of St. George's Caye Day, on September 10th, commemorates a defining moment in the country's history with ceremonies and patriotic activities nationwide. The month culminates on Independence Day, September 21st, when Belize celebrates with official ceremonies, parades, concerts, fireworks, and community gatherings from sunrise until long after sunset.

San Pedro Town celebrates Independence in true island fashion, blending patriotism with its vibrant community spirit. The festivities peak on the evening of September 20th at the Saca Chispas Field, where residents and visitors gather for the annual Independence Eve Celebration. The event features live entertainment, local food and drinks, cultural performances, and plenty of dancing before the excitement builds toward the traditional 21-gun salute and midnight countdown welcoming Independence Day. On September 21st, the celebration continues with the colorful Independence Day Parade, winding through the town's main streets as marching bands, school groups, community organizations, businesses, and decorated floats proudly display Belize's red, white, and blue. It's a lively showcase of island pride that invites everyone—locals and visitors alike—to join in celebrating Belize's independence.



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Across the country, the calendar is packed with signature events. Highlights include the Carnival Road March on September 5th, when Belize City erupts into a colorful display of elaborate costumes, energetic mas' groups, and nonstop soca music. Music lovers won't want to miss the 12th Annual Belize Soca & Culture Festival on September 20th at the Belize Civic Center, headlined by the legendary Machel Montano, widely known as the King of Soca. The festival has become one of Belize's premier September attractions, drawing visitors from across the region for an unforgettable night of Caribbean entertainment.

Of course, no September experience would be complete without enjoying Belizean food, music, and hospitality. Savor a plate of rice and beans with stew chicken, fresh seafood by the sea, or a delicious fry jack for breakfast. Grab an ice-cold Belikin, dance to the rhythm of soca, punta, and brukdown, and don't be surprised if someone tells you, "Comeh mek we celebrate!" That's simply the Belizean way.

This September, Belize isn't just celebrating another anniversary—it's celebrating its identity. So, whether you find yourself dancing, soaking up the island vibes, or exploring the country's rich cultural traditions, one thing is certain: Belize at 45 is ready to show the world exactly who it is.






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