

St. Croix Real Estate reviews

Featuring real estate market updates and local news of St. Croix, USVI

DECEMBER 2010



photo © Ted Davis

MORE SHIPS ARRIVE

Cruise ships began their return to St. Croix in October and continue to arrive here in ever increasing numbers. In fact, during the 2010-2011 season, St. Croix will host more ships than it has in over ten years. They usually dock at the Ann E. Abramson Pier in Frederiksted, which is 1526 feet long and can manage two ships at once. Cruise lines include Celebrity, Holland America and Royal Caribbean International. Cruisers are enchanted by our island, and some choose their cruising itinerary specifically for the St. Croix port of call.

"I love this island because it is so beautiful and the people here couldn't be more welcoming!" exclaimed Jill Gage, a New Hampshire cruise passenger who had chosen a Christiansted shopping excursion. "Our husbands are busy diving to their hearts' content, but we love the boutiques."

Her friend, Cathy McAndrews, added, "Our goal now is to return for a full week and rent one of those gorgeous villas. We're going to make that happen!"

Famed for its variety of activities, St. Croix also offers cruisers back road jeep and ATV tours, visits to historic sites and Whim Great House, Cruzan Rum factory tours, a trip to the Botanical Gardens, Buck Island snorkeling excursions, and an idyllic day at the beach. Cruise ship passengers might even catch a green flash at sunset.



GOVERNOR LAYS OUT AGENDA

At the December 1st press conference at Government House on St. Thomas, Governor John de Jongh, Jr. targeted safety and economic growth as his primary concerns for his second term in office.

De Jongh outlined strategies that he and Lt. Governor Gregory Francis will undertake: looking at the structure of some of the government's semi-autonomous agencies (WAPA, Waste Management and hospitals, for example), encouraging economic investment and creation of jobs by the private sector and streamlining inaugural events.

Speaking of the current economic challenges, the Governor said "I believe the government should lead by example."

The Governor intends to cut the \$300,000 price tag of the 2007 inaugural activities by over \$100,000. Whatever monies remain from the \$200,000 already designated for the events will be reappropriated.

Furthermore, DeJongh noted that he and Francis will elicit suggestions from people locally and off island on how to streamline government operations.

The dreamy, lazy days of summer and fall seem suddenly behind us and the island is all a-buzz and optimistic about our coming season.

Jump-Up came on the heels of Thanksgiving heralding in the holiday season with steel pan music and mocko jumbies dancing through the streets of downtown Christiansted. We had a very lively and well-attended Jump Up-I wasn't at all upset to circle a few times to try to find a parking space! The Gentlemen of Jones put up their Christmas lights; shops and restaurants were decked out and offered specials for the night, and everyone came out for the party. Locals and visitors strolled the festive streets, sampling island foods and wandering into our delightful boutiques and stopping for a sunset coquito on the waterfront. And I'm sure that many of us probably gave thanks one more time for the life we enjoy on here on St. Croix.

The island is looking fabulously lush and temperatures have cooled delightfully-the mercury dropped to a rare 65 degrees the other night. The Roseway is once again on display in Christiansted Harbor for the season and ready to take you on romantic sunset sails. Kayaks, sailboats of all sizes, fishing boats and power boats were feverishly decorated for the Christmas Boat Parade which sailed by an impressive crowd last weekend in Christiansted harbor. And we residents are looking a bit more festive too. The Botanical Gardens has thrown its lovely holiday gala and one of our popular island bands, Stanley and the Sleepless Knights is preparing to carol Crucian-style, going from neighborhood to neighborhood to usher in the dawn. Good cheer abounds and Carnival is just around the corner. I've spent more time than usual lately in our island's west end, and have seen and spoken to our new cruise ship passengers that are very much enjoying their new stop on St. Croix.

With Carnival, of course, comes the Three Kings Day Parade, spectacular fireworks and the New Year. I love a new year! There is always an air of possibility and the promise of opportunity. It's a time to revisit our dreams and ambitions--to begin anew. Ever dream of living on an island? Or perhaps for those of you who already call St. Croix home, it's time to upsize, downsize or just make a change. Please call us to help you. We are St. Croix's experts on the process of buying and selling real estate on our island paradise.

Rest assured that when you select Coldwell Banker Land-de Wilde Realty, you will be working with one of the top-ranked home selling and buying real estate companies in the U.S., according to J.D. Power and Associates. Please come visit us at Coldwell Banker Land-de Wilde Realty at any of our three offices in The Buccaneer Hotel, Gallows Bay Marketplace and Gentle Winds Condominiums to preview our selection of available homes, condominiums, home sites and commercial properties. You can reach me at Coldwell Banker Land-de Wilde Realty at 340-718-7000, ext. 110 at the Buccaneer Hotel. Please note our new phone number. You can also visit our websites at www.coldwellbankervi.com or www.coldwellbankervi.com/vacationrentals to view a comprehensive list of outstanding opportunities available on St. Croix. Contact us today to help you find your own piece of paradise in the Caribbean. It is amazing how many responses we are generating from all our online marketing including eBay, Craigslist and YouTube. Search for our properties there as well! We are happy to become your real estate resource. Use us to help your friends and family anytime!

As we acknowledge the passing of 2010 and move toward our next ventures in 2011, I want to wish you all unbounded happiness in the New Year--may all your dreams come true.

Amy Land-de Wilde, Broker Owner
Coldwell Banker Land-de Wilde Realty



Amy Land-deWilde

FEATURE PROPERTY OF THE MONTH

Cane Bay Beauty



With over 400 feet of beachfront and 25 acres of gorgeous hillside land, this great hotel and/or condo development site is a true value. Situated in one of St. Croix's favorite areas, with beaches, world-class diving, and golf, this property has historic ruins and hotel buildings that can be restored. Offered by Amy Land-de Wilde, 340-718-7000, ext 110 or amydewilde@att.net

MLS #10-1660

\$989,000

ALL ABOUT ART

Some call it Art Walk, others call it Art Night. Officially, it's ART THURSDAY. St. Croix galleries and jewelry studios collectively opened the 2010-2011 Art Thursday season on November 18th. It was extremely well attended and very lively. The next event will be held December 16th, and the evenings of art will continue every third Thursday through June.

Fourteen years ago St. Croix artist Maria Henle (1955-2007), so highly regarded for her etchings and scenic landscapes, came up with the notion of a joint art-opening event. She aroused the enthusiasm of other local galleries and jewelers and, *voila*, Art Thursday was born. It was all about the art. Now, other retailers keep their doors open as well, and the restaurants get their share of business as well.

Art Thursday provides an opportunity for a twilight stroll through downtown Christiansted and its myriad galleries showcasing their latest works. St. Croix boasts an admirable number of artists who live and work on the island. Their variety is vast and includes oil paintings, watercolors, photography, sculpture, jewelry, fabric arts and fine carpentry.

HOE DOWN AT THE DIVI

Caribbean Country 93.5 WVVI and the USVI Department of Tourism presented "Country Music Week" on St. Croix, December 10th through December 15th. Divi Carina Bay Resort hosted the Hoe Down Sunday afternoon, December 12th.

The Caribbean has always loved country music. Legend has it that the St. Lucians started the love affair long ago. Hitting the airwaves in February of this year, Caribbean Country 93.5 is St. Croix's first country station in many years. "We're going gangbusters," said station manager, Doug Harris. "It's America's music; the songs tell stories," he added.

Caribbean Country, along with the Department of Tourism, brought in Nashville artists such as Joe Nichols, the Randy Rodgers Band, Jessica Andrews, Ira Dean and Marcel--not to mention Charlie Pride's brother, Stephen. "We expected over 1000-1500 people out there," said Harris. His anticipation of "tons of fun, food, families and kids in the pool" was met.

ISLAND PROPERTIES



MLS # 10-1820

\$89,900



MS #10-465

\$99,000



MLS # 10-2096

\$679,000



DECEMBER'S REAL ESTATE DEAL

Fabulous fully furnished studio condo right on the white sand beach with great pool and popular restaurant on premises. Renovated with new furniture, new kitchen cabinets and appliances, and an energy saving mini split AC unit. Lovely water view and a proven excellent rental property. Great move-in price at \$117,000. MLS # 08-1543. Offered by Amy Land-de Wilde, 340-718-7000, ext 110 or E-mail amydewilde@att.net

ST. CROIX HOSTS INTERNATIONAL MARATHON

Organized by the Virgin Island Pace Runners, the St. Croix International Marathon boasts a picturesque west end course and has been run by competitors from England, Spain, Italy, France, the United States, Canada and all over the Caribbean. Scenic vistas included the lovely Frederiksted seaside, Hamm's Bluff, Mahogany Road and the Rain Forest. It finished on Strand Street, across from the Ann Abramson pier.

"It's three races in one," says Wallace Williams, the race's founder and director. "It's the 9th St. Croix International Marathon, the 36th VI Half Marathon and the 6th St. Croix Marathon Relay." He maintains that the races continue to attract everyone from devoted athletes to "plumbers, lawyers and shoe sales people."

"The finish line is the exact spot in the Danish West Indies where slavery was declared ended," says Williams.

The St. Croix International Marathon was the first in the world to be run in the new millennium. That was January 1st, 2001. It's a certified course and a qualifier for the Boston Marathon, World Championships and the Olympics. "A lot of people like to run this race as the first in a string of marathons," says Williams.

ST. CROIX REAL ESTATE MARKET WATCH

CLOSED SALES COMPARISON - 11/30/08-11/30/09 VERSUS 11/30/09-11/30/10

	2008-2009 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	AVERAGE PRICE	2009-2010 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	AVERAGE PRICE
Home Sales*	109	249	389,650	115	300	453,852
Condo Sales*	45	267	243,716	48	289	205,574
Land under \$39,999	53	234	29,149	26	266	30,473
Land over \$40,000	74	303	155,641	59	277	110,390
Commercial	11	371	443,181	6	167	281,666

Information from the St. Croix Multiple Listing Service

*The average sales price and the average days on market could be skewed greatly by only one sale or because of the small number of annual sales.