

# St. Croix Real Estate *reviews*

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

FEBRUARY 2011

## CRUCIAN CARNIVAL KICKS OFF 2011



Following inaugural ceremonies and the solemn swearing-in of Governor John de Jongh and Lt. Governor Gregory Francis, Crucian Carnival ushered in the New Year with a burst of traditional gaiety. Festival events included J'ouvert, the Crucian Rican All ah We Tramp and Breakfast, the Calypso Monarch Contest, the Childrens' Parade, the Three Kings Day Parade and, finally, the boat races and Festival Wrap Up with fireworks. The convivial spirit of carnival took over and Country Day student Taryn Mashburn reigned as queen. There was scratch music, steel pans, dance, local foods and home grown tunes throughout the island.

Not to mention a costume-

making workshop at the Dorsch Cultural Center in Frederiksted. So began 2011 on St. Croix.

Visitors and cruise passengers were just plain lucky. Of course, some plan their vacation around the Three Kings Day Parade.

The Celebrity Mercury happened to be in port for the big parade and cruisers marveled at their good fortune. During the parade, St. Croix attorney Devin Carrington befriended cruisers from Pennsylvania and Virginia. "They'd been to several islands," said Carrington, "but they found St. Croix to be the most enjoyable, memorable and friendly." Carrington went on to say that one couple wanted to buy a piece of land on the island. "They emphasized the congeniality of the people here," he said.

Attorney Carrington shared his own philosophy that "if we get to know each other, we'll see that we're not all that much different."

Crucian conviviality is catching...even without a parade

## DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM EASES AIRLINE BOOKING QUANDARY

In late December American Airlines, our territory's leading carrier, announced its decision to sever ties with online booking agencies Orbitz and Expedia. Delta Airlines followed suit, discontinuing flight listings with lesser known booking sites like CheapOAir, One Travel and Bookit.

In the wake of these announcements and recognizing the potential impact these decisions could have on travel to the Virgin Islands, the USVI Department of Tourism leapt to a proactive stance. Tourism has developed a section on its website [www.visitusvi.com](http://www.visitusvi.com) that lists tour operators and online booking sites that continue to offer travel packages featuring American and Delta. Web addresses are provided, as are offline tour operators and their phone contacts. Travelers are encouraged to call Tourism with questions or email the department at [info@usvitourism.vi](mailto:info@usvitourism.vi). The department will also provide updates via its Facebook and Twitter pages.

"Our goal is to ensure a balance of supporting all available channels for travelers to book packaged travel to the territory," said Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty.

Carnival is a phenomenon, no doubt about it. It is our island's heritage and tradition, as it is in Rio, New Orleans, Trinidad, St. Thomas and St. John. Our Carnival is a celebration of Caribbean foods and music, roots and dance. It's much ado about everything Crucian. It must be spectacular to an unsuspecting visitor!

Yet, in the midst of all that hubbub and all the feathers, many of us still found time and space to wander off and relish moments of quiet to herald in the new year. We enjoy the chirping of all the birds that visit for the season, catching the sunrise from its winter location and watching it set with the amazing blaze of color that we're spoiled by. There's nothing quite like a Caribbean morning--- the cool breeze on your cheek and that glorious sun breaking into day! You can ooze your toes into the sand or put on your walking shoes and turn toward the hills. Or you can simply sit with a book and look out to sea. We love the frigates and delight watching the pelicans dive for fish! Each day offers countless moments in which to marvel at our bounty here on St. Croix.

February always offers an array of enticing events. The Art Show, which opened 1/28 at the Canegata Ball Park Recreational Building, got it all started. On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, St. Croix Landmark's Society launched its House and Driving Tours, which is always a great way to see St. Croix's fine homes. The Caribbean Community Theater opens its 2011 season with *Cabaret* on the 4<sup>th</sup> and performances continue all month. By the weekend of the 11<sup>th</sup>, the island hits full swing. Christiansted's Valentine Jump Up is slated for Friday night and the St. Croix Hospice Regatta starts races Saturday morning. Care to deck out and dance for the puppies? The St. Croix Animal Shelter hosts its annual Fur Ball Saturday night the 12<sup>th</sup>. Cupid arrives on the 14<sup>th</sup>. After that, it's all about art. We've got Art Thursday on the 17<sup>th</sup> and both Sunset Jazz and the famed opening party of the Good Hope Art Show in Frederiksted on Friday night. It's Presidents Day Weekend! The Krewe de Barkus parades canines down the C'sted Wharf on Saturday. Out West, agriculture and art go hand in hand. You can visit the Agriculture & Food Fair (Agrifest) and then head down the street to view the Good Hope Art Show if you missed opening night. February on St. Croix just can't be beat. Why not wind it up with a Ruins Ramble on Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup>?

So many visitors have expressed desire to own a home here or they would like a piece of land on which to build their dream home. Some want to come and rent one of our villas for a week or so to try our island on for size and tool around and explore all the wonderful treats we have to offer. There is a treasure here for everyone.

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](http://www.coldwellbankervi.com) or [www.coldwellbankervi.com/vacationrentals](http://www.coldwellbankervi.com/vacationrentals).

The festivity of the holidays and Carnival has once again come and gone and we set about reminding ourselves of resolutions and such. The time has come. We head off into 2011 with gusto.

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



*Amy Land-deWilde*

# 290 Cotton Valley



Pretty east end home on a paved road with a terrific wrap-around, covered gallery affording great breezes on both levels and a view of Buck Island with the beautiful turquoise Caribbean Sea. With almost 2,000 square feet of living space, this is a comfortably roomy home with three bedrooms, two and a half baths and a wonderful open layout. The yard is perfect for kids and pets. Amenities include a generator and an auxiliary shed that serves as a work room & additional storage. Listed by Amy Land-de Wilde, 340-718-7000 or amydewilde@att.net

MLS 11-6 \$443,000

## VI SMOKE-FREE ACT IN EFFECT

The Virgin Islands Department of Health has extended the enforcement date of the Smoke-Free Act from November 10th, 2010 to February 10th, 2011.

The idea is to brief residents and business owners on the specifics behind the smoking ban. To that end, officials from the Department of Health and Licensing and Consumer Affairs will host town hall meetings throughout the territory.

According to Health Commissioner Julia Sheen, "This will be an opportunity for residents as well as business owners to be educated on the new smoke-free law, as well as the health effects of smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke."

The definition of an "enclosed area" in which smoking is prohibited has been amended to mean a structure that has an enclosed roof and more than two substantial walls that have no significant opening to allow air in from the outside. Failure to comply will be considered a civil offense.

Meanwhile, the Divi Bay Carina Resort and Casino instituted its' own non-smoking policy on June 1st, actively promoting a smoke-free environment prior to enforcement by law.

## A BETTER WAY TO ISAAC'S BAY

The trail to Isaac's Bay just got easier. While the destination is every bit as alluring, the journey has become delightful in and of itself--thanks to the VI Resource Conservation and Development Council (VI.RC&D) and The Nature Conservancy.

Having received monies from a NOAA Habitat Restoration and Economic Stimulus grant, VI.RC&D stabilized the old trail and built water berms to direct water off the trail and into surrounding ground to disperse it. The Nature Conservancy assisted. The team also forged a new trail that bypasses the East End Beach where up to 300 turtles nest each year. "The chance of spooking a turtle or stepping on a nest was too great," said Richard Gideon of The Nature Conservancy. East End Beach is a turtle sanctuary. "People thought they could play with the turtles," he said.

"We wanted to make a new tourist friendly trail, one that made it easier to get to Isaac's Bay," said Gideon. Voila!

## ISLAND PROPERTIES



MLS # 10-1861 \$67,000



MLS #10-2290 \$169,900



MS #11-116 \$262,750

### 330 Hermon Hill



### FEBRUARY'S REAL ESTATE DEAL

You'll fall in love with the extremely spacious and open layout of the three-bedroom, two-bath main house with an unbelievably large kitchen, two-car carport, two porches and tons of storage. Add to that an income producing separate two-bedroom, two-bath guest house with its own porch, storage, large kitchen and dining room and you have the complete package! Well maintained with high ceilings and a fenced flat yard perfect for playing or running the dog! Great location! Offered by Amy Land-de Wilde, 340-718-7000, amydewilde@att.net . MLS 10-2210 \$595,000

## A WORD ON WEDDINGS

Destination weddings are back on the upswing and St. Croix boasts sundry ideal settings for an "I do."

The ceremony can be performed on a beach, a boat, a vacation villa, a relative's island home, in front of a sugar mill, at a hotel, in a church or a synagogue. The possibilities are endless, but St. Croix has several professional wedding consultants to help orchestrate the event.

Local jeweler Diane Chandler is a minister who takes her role to heart. "Weddings are one of the things people do where everyone there is really happy. Everyone is so full of love!" she exclaims.

Kim Milliken of Seaside Weddings is a minister herself but often works with Chandler. As owner of Seaside Weddings, Milliken arranges location, music, rehearsal dinner, reception, catering, photographer and flowers. She custom fits your wedding. Other consultants include Dream Island Events, Big Beard's Weddings in Paradise and most of the island's resorts and hotels.

## ST. CROIX REAL ESTATE MARKET WATCH

### CLOSED SALES COMPARISON - 1/31/09-1/31/10 VERSUS 1/31/10-1/31/11

	2009-2010 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	AVERAGE PRICE	2010-2011 SOLD	AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	AVERAGE PRICE
Home Sales*	120	263	398,740	98	297	462,176
Condo Sales*	44	274	223,801	57	273	192,027
Land under \$39,999	47	228	23,381	31	281	30,639
Land over \$40,000	82	280	150,321	50	290	109,852
Commercial	12	364	412,916	7	241	288,571

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.