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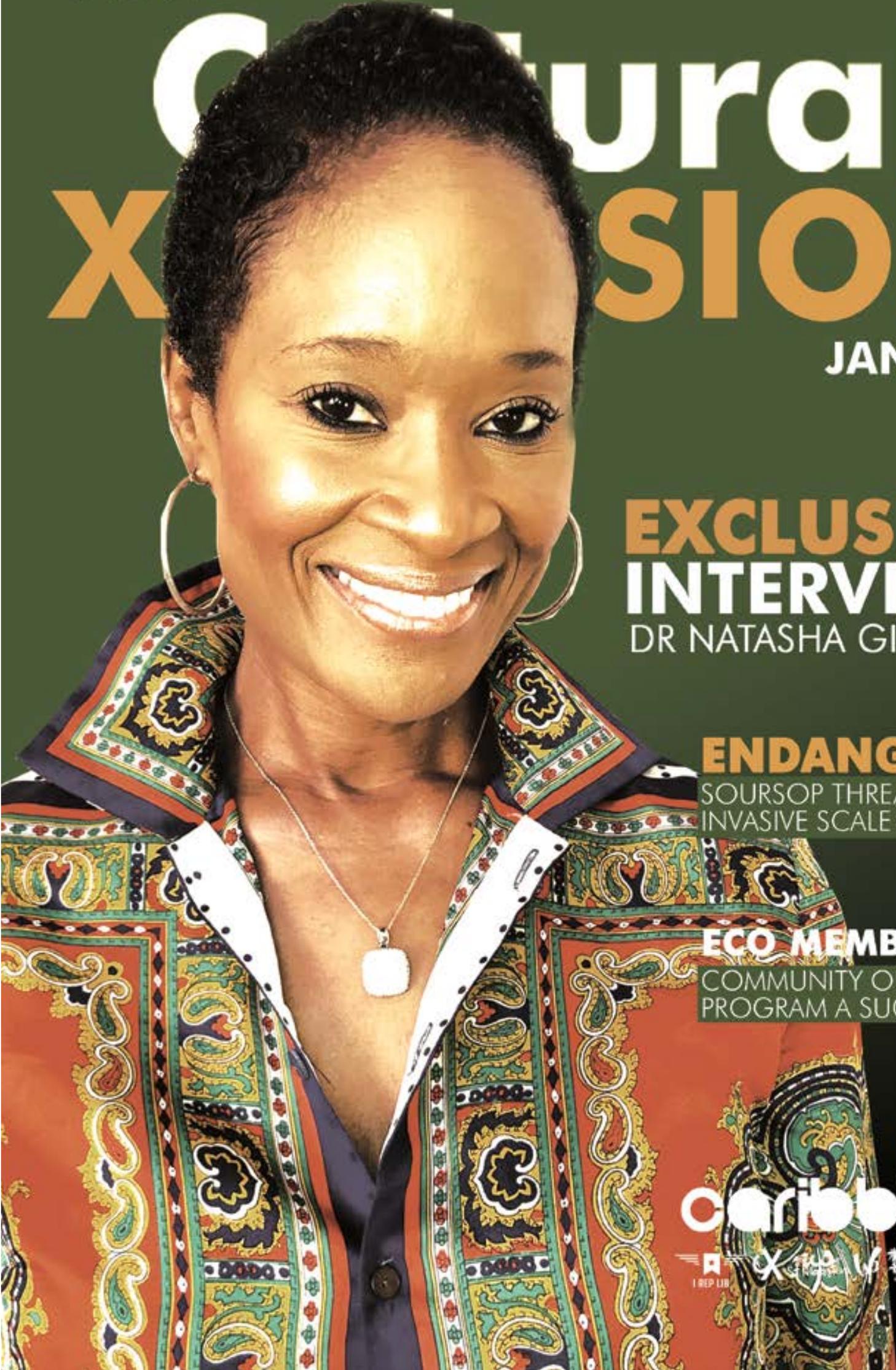
JAN 2019

**EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW**
DR NATASHA GITTENS

ENDANGERED
SOURSOP THREATENED BY
INVASIVE SCALE DISEASE

ECO MEMBERSHIP
COMMUNITY OUTREACH
PROGRAM A SUCCESS

WorldCharts
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MAJOR FIGURES IN AFRO CARIBBEAN HISTORY

One-Tété Lohkay: A Great Woman. A Hero. A St. Martinier

By babyphatsxm

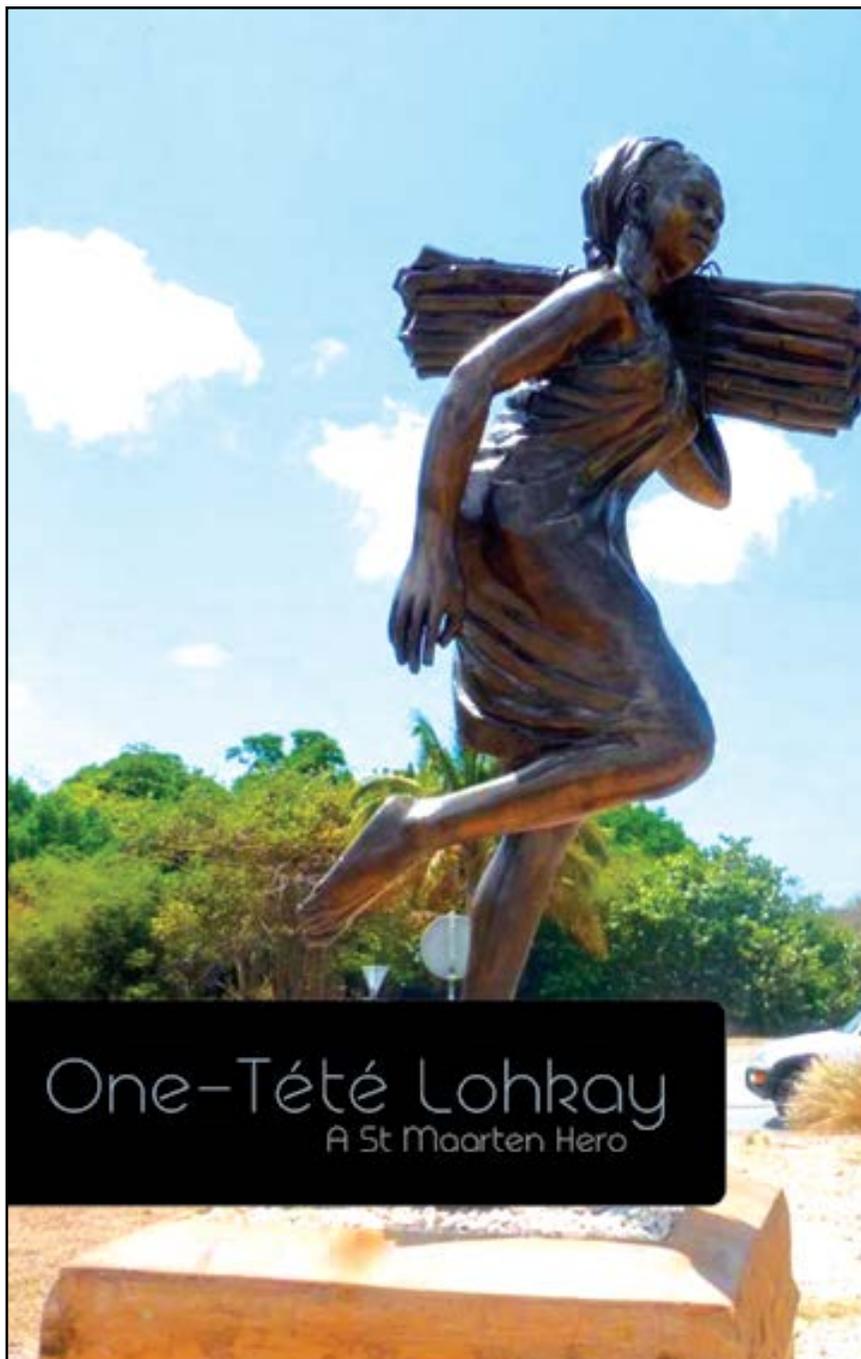
SHE IS ONE of the Monumental women who fought and risked their lives for freedom, such as Nanny of Jamaica, Queen Mary and Bottom belly of the Virgin Islands, Harriet Tubman of the USA and other Champions of freedom.

This is her story:

There was once an enslaved woman on a plantation in St. Martin. Her name was Lohkay. She was a proud and brave woman and defied the savage system of slavery by her courage and determination. Back in those days, most slave women were referred by their masters as "insolent" and "evil" because they were not afraid to answer back. Their tongues were their main and most powerful weapon to backfire at the injustices of the plantation.

And Lohkay was no exception. She was a spitfire in the South of St. Martin. And Her stand for human dignity made living in oppression intolerable! So she ran away!! Her quest for freedom was cut short when she was hunted down and recaptured.

They brought her back to the plantation and beat her severely. The authorities then ordered to cut off one of Lohkay's breasts and she became known as "One-Tété Lohkay". Cutting off the breast of Black women who ran away or were in-



involved in uprisings was not uncommon in the unholy system of slavery. Laws protected the evil, savage behaviours of plantation owners, because slaves were qualified as private property. So rapes, abuse, mutilations, exploitation, crippling of Black bodies were very frequent.

Lohkay was tended by the plantation's

"bush doctor", using the herbal medicines of St. Martin. Lohkay rose from her sick-bed, uncowed and even more determined to be free. Could you imagine the courage of this woman?!? She was warned that if she ever ran away again, **THE OTHER BREAST WOULD BE RIPPED OFF HER BODY!!!**

But she would

have preferred to die a Free woman than to be belittled as an object and live in slavery!!

So One-Tété Lohkay ran away again!

Not only did One-Tété Lohkay remain free but, according to Oral Tradition, she regularly raided the plantations in

Southern Cul-de-Sac for food and goods. And most importantly, to visit her people!

Photographer & Student of St. Martin's proverbs, Wilfred Roumou, recalled the admiration with which his grandmother referred to One-Tété Lohkay: how she lived freely in the hills, how at times her temporary camp-fire could be seen at night from the plantation mansions and shacks below. At dawn, as the slaves were herded out in the field, smoke from Lohkay's camp could be seen spiraling up to the heavens... **INCARNATING A SIGN OF FREEDOM AND HOPE**. Thus she became a Living Legend throughout the island_ And today, she's a Hero!

One-Tété Lohkay is an Official National Symbol of ST. MARTIN.

Let's remember this powerful woman and fellow St. Martinier who was not afraid to defy the vicious institution and it's evildoers. Her story is one of courage and inspiration!

May she rest in peace

***Sources*:** National Symbols of St. Martin by Sekou
There are no photos of her, so I made that image myself :)

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ECO SXM COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM A SUCCESS

In Nov 2018 a joint collaboration between Spaceless Gardens and ECO St Maarten Agricultural Research and Development Foundation was introduced in an effort to raise funds to complete the restroom facility at the St Maarten Agricultural Research and Development Centre.

The fund raising was a great success and the organizations were able to add 26 new members to its community outreach initiatives.

The community outreach challenge started back in Nov 2018 and encouraged community members to contribute \$100 to help the organizations complete the restroom and contribute toward having a long term healthier

choice for selecting their organic produce.

The effort to raise \$2200 was a success within 1 month of the challenge initiation and amounted to accumulating \$2600 of which was contributed to add up to the total amount of \$2970 that was actually needed to compete the restroom structure at the center.

Members that contributed were presented with a start up package with samples of what was produced at the Agricultural Center. Members will also receive a membership card that will grant them special privileges throughout the year of 2019 such as:

- 10%-20% off organic produce
- Monthly free herbal Bush Tea



Herbs and info on how to use them for personal health benefits

- VIP access to Exclusive community events in the future

- One Free Veggie Burger, Wrap or Smoothie, 1 time per month for the entire year of 2019

- For businesses or entrepreneurs :

Monthly Advertising 1x4 space in Cultural Xpression News - Magazine based on their contribution.

- 10% Discounts from Network Electronic and Store Distributors

Members will be able to renew their membership every year which funds will be used toward

compensated volunteer opportunities for the under privilege, facility upgrades and community needs.

The community outreach challenge was more than a fund raising, its was an effort to see how members of surrounding communities can come together socially and make a difference

in their or someone else's community without us having to put all the burdens or complaints on local government. The challenge proved that they are community members out there that are not just sitting and waiting on government to make a change for them, but if the opportunities are presented, some are willing to do even as little or as much as they can to see the mission, objective or community outreach efforts a reality.

Now that the structure for the restroom is completed the final phase of installing the washing station, toilet and shower needed to facilitate com-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

THE ENDANGERED SOURSOP

JANUARY was a good month. For the start of the year nature has already started to share her blessings in abundance. Over the past 3 weeks I have not been able to do much as the recovery of my fractured toe had me a bit in a steadfast position. Never the less, I still try my best to get out in nature and let her also do her healing on me. Nothing better than fresh air, hot sun and a productive group of volunteers. Pass few days I have been focus on soil adjustments and seed germination while volunteers come together



er to help complete the rest room at the agricultural center. Today we were blessed to harvest a variety of organic produce. Produced gathered today was an estimated 30+ Kilos ranging from soursop, egg plant, luffa, cherry toma-

atoes, arugula, sea-season pepper and calaloo. Today, a few community members also stopped by to show their support and collected their fresh produce, reserving their soursop from days before. Most visi-

tors especially look forward to indulging in the sweetness of the mild tangy fruit. Each time we harvest soursop I notice they don't stay very long on the table at the farm. A very important thing I observed over the past 2 years is the significant decrease in the fruits availability on the island.

Soursop also known as Guanabana is a seasonal fruit found

in tropical climates such as the Caribbean, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

I first started to observe this shortage in 2017 around carnival time when I was forced to buy bottle soursop processed in the Dominican Republic to use for making my fresh fruit smoothies. As it was while back i cant recall exactly how much it cost me at the time, but I believe it was less then 1\2 pound for around \$8.

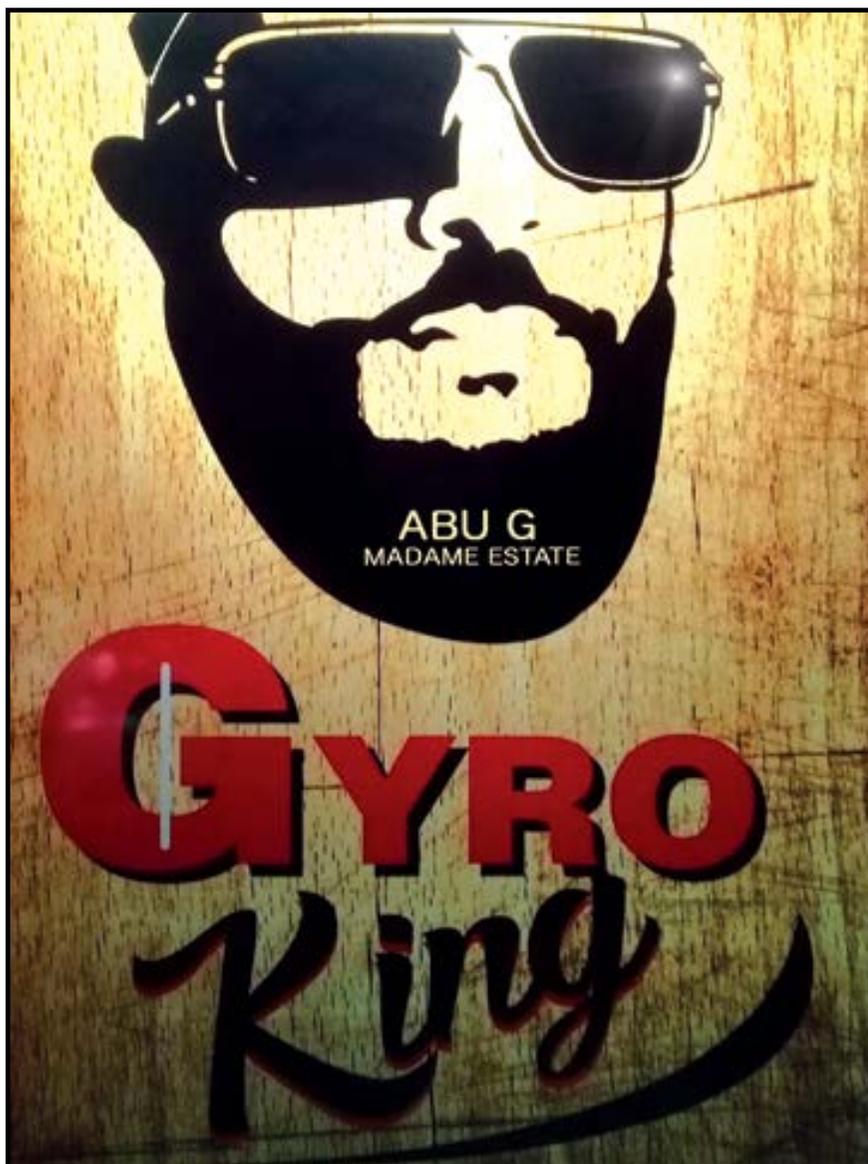
It's been awhile since have seen soursop on the fruit stand of the provision ladies at the side of the roads. Once again observing this shortage prompted me to do a bit of research to see if was able to maybe purchase soursop from a dis-

tributor online I decided to google it and not to my surprise it popped up on Amazon. The topical fruit seem to be very poplar on the highly used platform and distributed by a company name Tropical Importers, but its not even available for sale at the moment and the price is not visible. This should get us to thinking, When are we going to safeguard mass production of this highly beneficial fruit in our Caribbean region ? . Below is a description outline of the tropical fruit describe on Amazon:

Soursop (Guanabana Product description)

The flesh of the fruit consists of an edible, white pulp, some fiber, and a core of indigest-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



ECO SXM COMMUNITY OUTREACH.....FROM PAGE 3



community members and volunteers that come to assist and give a helping hand to the farm will be the next step. The restroom will also be use by students in times of educational programs and visitors of the Island who seek the Green Foot Print as

they travel the Caribbean.

The St Maarten Agricultural Research and Development Center will be a facility focused on creating education programs and social activities toward stimulating the development and sustainability

of agricultural production and awareness for country St Maarten.

ECO SXM is pleased to announce that they will soon be adding an Arts & Crafts Wooden Carpentry workshop that will

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Joe's Jewelry

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THE ENDAGERED SOURSOP...FROM PAGE 4

ible, black seeds. The species is the only member of its genus suitable for processing and preservation. The pulp is also used to make fruit nectar, smoothies, fruit juice drinks, as well as candies, sorbets, and ice cream flavorings. Due to the fruit's widespread cultivation and popularity in parts of Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, soursop and its derivative products are consumed across the world, also via branded food and beverage products

available in many countries. In Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Harar (Ethiopia), it is a common fruit, often used for dessert as the only ingredient, or as an agua fresca beverage; in Colombia and Venezuela, it is a fruit for juices, mixed with milk. Ice cream and fruit bars made of soursop are also very popular. The seeds are normally left in the preparation, and removed while consuming, unless a blender is used for processing.

Health Benefits



Supportive members of St Maarten Agricultural Center

Soursop, if added to your routine diet may harvest great longterm health benefits for the consumer. The fruit can be use for many desert creative types and the leave

is great for making tea which may help the body to relax and sleep. Over all the pant has many great medical values.

To outline a few benefits to gath-

ered some info from Health Line to share with you:

Soursop is typically eaten raw by cutting the fruit in half and scooping out the flesh. Fruits range in size and

can be quite large, so it may be best to divide it into a few portions.

A typical serving of this fruit is low in calories yet high in several nutrients like fiber and vitamin C. A 3.5-ounce (100-gram) serving of raw soursop contains :

- * **Calories:** 66
- * **Protein:** 1 gram
- * **Carbs:** 16.8 grams
- * **Fiber:** 3.3 grams
- * **Vitamin C:** 34% of the RDI
- * **Potassium:** 8% of the RDI
- * **Magnesium:** 5% of the RDI

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

ECO SXM COMMUNITY OUTREACH...FROM PAGE 4

be also utilized for educational purposes. The creation of a carpenters corner can assist with creating wood works such as St Maarten Made Crafts, Grow Boxes, Cabinets and even assist in times of roof repairs post disasters. Building back a resilient community by the community is the best way out, and building public private partnerships is the future towards sustaining these stronger resilient communities, Wyatte mentioned.

ECO St Maarten will soon be open to the general public more information to be released soon.

ECO St Maarten Agricultural Research and Development Centre is a Development project founded by Mr Denicio Wyatte of Spaceless Gardens and Powered by ECO SXM Agricultural Research and Development Foundation. The project has been support-

ed by organizations such as Prins Bernhard Cultuur Fonds, UNDP, UNESCO, BAK, VSA, Spaceless Gardens, Island Real Estate, Accessible Ventures, Watzz Publishing, Abu G Shwarma, SXM Optical, STM Shipping, St Maarten Chamber of Commerce, The Tweede Kamer and 26 Community Members.

"We must re-

member that no one is promised tomorrow. So once we're in the right place, at the right time, to do the right thing, then it must mean that we are actually chosen to make a difference Today." - Wyatte President ECO SXM

Interested in Becoming a member of ECO St Maarten Agricultural Research and Devel-

opment Foundation in 2019 ? There are 24 more slots available. Please contact +1721 553-6300 or added this network

number to your WhatsApp +1721 524-4733 for more information.

ECO St Maarten

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THE ENDANGERED SOURSOP ...FROM PAGE 5

*** Thiamine:** 5% of the RDI

Soursop also contains a small amount of niacin, riboflavin, folate and iron.

Interestingly, many parts of the fruit are used medicinally, including the leaves, fruit and stems. It is also used in cooking and can even be applied to the skin.

Research has also unearthed a variety of health benefits for soursop in recent years.

Some test-tube and animal studies have even found that it may help with everything from alleviating inflammation to slowing cancer growth.

If interested further on implementing the tasty fruit in your diet, You can read up a bit more on the benefits @ healthline.com/nutrition/soursop-benefits

Over the past year the soursop tree on the island have been suffering with a Scale Bug disease which robs the plant from its essential nutrient intake.

To understand more about this disease, I gathered some info based on my research a few years back online from gardeningknowhow.com :<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/plant-problems/pests/insects/control-plant-scale.htm>

The scale plant insect consists of three types: armored scale soft scale mealybug Scales, both armored and soft, are the most destructive. Armored scales are more difficult to control once mature. Soft scale bugs excrete large amounts of hon-



Soursop, egg plant, luffa, sugar apples, okra, sweet and season peppers grown at ECO SXM.

eydew, which encourages the growth of sooty mold, a black-colored fungus that interferes with photosynthesis. Mealybugs are easier to control. Scales cannot fly so, dispersal depends on the movement of crawlers. Crawlers may be detected by placing double-sticky tape on plant branches. Scale Insect Control Scale-damaged plants look withered and sickly. Leaves turn yellow and may drop from the plant. They may also have sticky sap or a black fungus on the leaves and stems. Heavily infested plants produce little new growth. If scale insects are not controlled, death of infested plants is possible. Scale insects are invasive and will infest other plants, so move infested plants away from healthy ones.

This invasive species causes a serious threat our production of the fruit and has to be addressed starting now. The St Maarten Agricultural Research and Development Center once completed will try its best to address the situation, seeking support from local community members and government to try keep the disease under control from taking over natures most beneficial crop types that may ensure and encourage healthier eating habits and life-style adjustments.

Soursop can fruit all year long, but best production is March through June, in the mean time as we have available we will keep the general public and encourage them to consume the fruit when available, as we don't know when the shortage may become an issue! Currently on <https://soursopstore.com> 2-3 pieces may cost you about \$79 excluding shipping. I don't think supporting your local farmers should be a food for thought !

Fresh organic produce, smoothies, natural juices and health vegan and sea food available Mon-Sat 11am to 2pm at St Maarten Agriculture Research and Development Center. Find out how you may become a member and invest with your community towards safe our food security. Support Spaceless Gardens and ECO St Maarten Agricultural Research and development center in 2019 ! One love

WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

- THE SUPPA DUPPA MORNING SHOW**
W/ SUPPA | WEEKDAYS 7AM - 10AM
- THE AM/PM WORKLOAD SHOW**
W/ GEE MONEY | WEEKDAYS 10AM - 2PM
- THE POWER HOUR**
W/ THE CUT CREATOR DJ OUTKAST | WEEKDAYS 2PM - 3PM
- SAGAN'S PLAYGROUND**
W/ SAGAN | WEEKDAYS 3PM - 6PM

SPECIALITY SHOWS

- DIRTY DUTCH MUSIC**
W/ CHUCKIE | FRIDAYS 10PM - 11PM
- DI-NAMIX TOP 40 COUNTDOWN**
W/ JOE WARRICK | SATURDAYS 3PM - 6PM
- DJ POWER MIX SHOW**
W/ DJ POWER | SATURDAYS 9PM - 10PM
- A STATE OF TRANCE**
W/ ARMIN VAN BUUREN | SATURDAYS 11PM - MIDNIGHT
- WADE-O RADIO SHOW**
W/ DJ WADE-O | SUNDAYS 12PM - 2PM
- FEEL RADIO**
W/ KP LONDON | SUNDAYS 3PM - 4PM

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THE FARMERS SEE:

GUAVABERRIES: ORIGINS - CONSUMPTION - NUTRITION FACTS & HEALTH BENEFITS



THE GUAVABERRY plant is a fruit tree that originated in the Caribbean and is now found wild in many locations including Central and South America, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and islands of the Lesser Antilles. Its cultivation has even expanded to Bermuda and the Philippines. In the US it is present in Hawaii and Florida where it is often referred to as the rumberry. It is not to be confused with the guava and in reality is a relative of sorts to the clove and eucalyptus plant.

It is a warm climate tree or shrub that grows well in rocky terrain and can reach anywhere from thirty-three up to sixty feet high. The red-brown branches produce small pink and white flowers before bearing fruit approximately a half-inch or under. The fruit color ranges from a yellow-orange hue to dark-red with little pulp encircling a single seed. It is a temperamental tree often not bearing fruit due to high

winds and insect infestation. Under favorable conditions the trees can bear fruit during various times of the year. For tropical plant enthusiasts, it can be grown indoors. As an indoor shrub it can potentially reach a height of about six feet.

History of Consumption

Years ago, the most common commodities were guavaberry wines and rums. During the late 1800's many countries saw profit in exporting the product to Denmark. However that is where it ended and it is hard to find this popular local staple in places other than the Caribbean.

Due to its sweetness, the liquor is usually mixed with other beverages. It can also enhance the flavor of many sauces and desserts when cooking. Holiday traditions in certain countries require that you carol from door to door singing for a taste of your neighbors' guavaberry liquor as each of them might

have a unique recipe for one to sample.

Common Consumption Today

Today guavaberry can be found in jams, juices, liquors, desserts (including ice cream), and sold by herbalists to make a syrup that can be used to treat liver conditions. Guavaberry liquor, which is made from rum, is a common Christmas drink on many islands, like Saint Maarten and the US Virgin Islands (2).

As a matter of fact, most tourists reap the benefits of consuming alcoholic beverages that contain guavaberries while traveling. However, armchair travelers are more likely to find guava juice in supermarkets, but this juice is not related to the guava fruit. If a person searches hard enough they can usually locate a market that sells guavaberry products in addition to guava products and a vast supply of guavaberry recipes are currently circulating on the In-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



- FOOT DETOX ● TEAS
- NATURAL DETOX ● FACIALS
- SAUNA ● SKIN CARE
- TI-SANE ● COUNSELLING
- DEEP TISSUE ● SESSION
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Tee-Zan / page + profile

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In This Issue

- Foot Detox
- Sauna / Natural Teas
- Deep Tissue Massage
- Ti-sane / Counselling
- Facial care / mask
- Skin Care
- Consultations



THE FARMERS SEE: GUAVABERRY

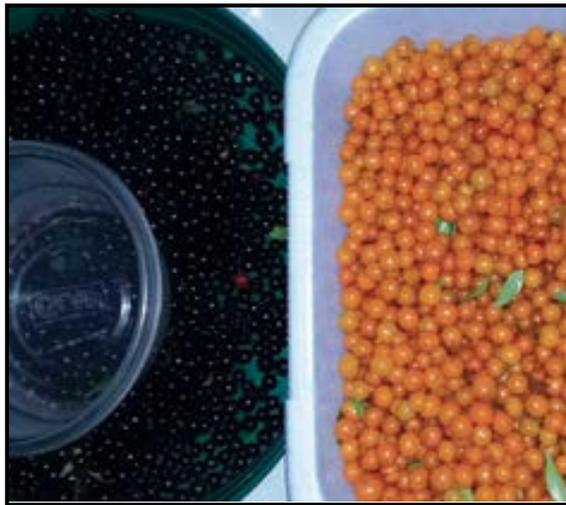
ternet.

Nutrition Facts: Vitamins, Minerals and Phytochemical Components

Guavaberries contain levels of vitamin C that are perhaps thirty times higher than oranges and provide B vitamins and minerals including iron (3). It also contains ash, calcium, carbohydrates, fiber, iron, niacin, phosphorus, protein, riboflavin, and thiamin.

Health Benefits: Medicinal Uses Based on Scientific Studies

Scientific studies will eventually catch up to the countries and cultures that have utilized this



treasured resource for years. Right now, the guavaberry is not studied in detail as its closest relative the camu-camu, would be the next likely candidate that would thrive if given the opportunity in our markets.

Preliminary studies have recently shown that higher levels of vitamin C consumption possibly lower the risk of heart disease and stroke. In addition, the findings from various studies indicate that low blood

levels of vitamin C can indicate a potential increase in the risk for both heart disease and stroke (1).

Finally, the consumption of the guavaberries may help prevent certain types of cancer, improve cardiovascular health, decrease the development or severity of cataracts, and can fight the common cold. Unfortunately to date, not many scientific studies with data to validate the benefits of consuming the guavaberry are available.

By <http://www.nutritiousfruit.com>

BY ALLRECIPES VEGATERIAN AND VEGAN RECIPES

Easy Creamy Vegan Macaroni and Cheese



INGREDIENTS

- 1(8 ounce) package elbow macaroni
- 2/3 cup rice bran oil, divided
- 2 cups unsweetened soy milk
- 1 cup nutritional yeast
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons yellow mustard
- 1 teaspoon ground paprika

Prep 10 m | Cook 33 m | Ready In 43 m

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Grease an 8-inch baking dish.

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Cook elbow macaroni in the boiling water, stirring occasionally, until tender yet firm to the bite, about 8 minutes. Drain and transfer to a large bowl; toss with 1 tablespoon rice bran oil.

Combine remaining rice bran oil, soy milk, nutritional yeast, garlic, mustard, and paprika in a high-powered food processor or blender; blend until smooth and creamy.

Pour soy milk mixture over elbow macaroni in the bowl; toss to mix. Pour into the prepared baking dish. Cover with aluminum foil. Bake in the preheated oven until center is bubbling, about 20 minutes.

THE FARMERS SEE: CILANTRO P2..

UNLIKE other herbs, cilantro leaves lose most of their flavor when dried, so it's better to use them fresh. If you need to preserve them, freezing is the best option. The seeds of the cilantro plant — coriander — require a different approach. The seeds can be used for planting or can be dried and used in a culinary capacity. Wait to harvest the seeds until most have turned brown on the plant.

Cut off the stalk a few inches below the seeds. Tie the stalks in bunches and hang them upside down in a brown paper bag. After about five days, the dried seeds should fall from the stalks into the bottom of the bag. You can store the seeds in an airtight, glass container for up to a year. To release the flavors, dry-roast or grind before use.

How to Use Your Cilantro
Cilantro has been

used in a variety of ways throughout recorded history. Ancient Greeks used cilantro essential oil as a component of perfume. During medieval times, the Romans used cilantro to mask the smell of rotten meat. Cilantro was also one of the first herbs to come to North America from the British colonies back in 1670. Today, cilantro leaves and coriander seeds are used in many types of cuisine.

The popularity of cilantro is owed to its fantastic flavor and versatility. For those who love cilantro, the possibilities are endless. From salsa and soup to meat or vegan curry, cilantro is a delicious ingredient, garnish, and flavor enhancer. For healthy, vegan recipes with cilantro, check out our organic guacamole or Indian-inspired green lentil salad with spiced carrots.



“Running Forward”

BUJU CRITICIZED FOR SILENCE ON DRUG CONVICTION P1

By The Gleaner

NOTED Jamaican historian and Garvey scholar, Professor Rupert Lewis, has slammed ex-drug convict and reggae artiste Buju Banton and his publicity team for seeking to equate the entertainer’s release from prison with Nelson Mandela’s after a decades-long fight against apartheid in South Africa.

The Grammy-winning singer, who was released late last year from the McRae Correctional Institution in the United States where he served

eight years for cocaine trafficking, will be the headline act of his first concert in Jamaica in nearly a decade themed ‘Long Walk to Freedom’. That harks back to the title of Mandela’s autobiography detailing the South African freedom fighter’s 27-year incarceration on Robben Island under white dictatorship.

“The appropriation of Mandela’s ‘Long Walk to Freedom’ is unfortunate because what he represented was collective struggle, the struggle of a people, the sacrifice.



What Buju represents is more personal freedom,” Lewis, now retired from the University of the West Indies, told The Gleaner last night.

Lewis deplored the commercial repackaging and image sanitisation of Buju Banton,

real name Mark Myrie, and the attempt to “appropriate from that heroic struggle and to attach it to a life of a singer – whether he was set up or not”.

“I take objection to people who confuse what that

slogan meant and how it has been appropriated.”

The historian argued that while he was a fan of some of Buju’s music and admired “his academic credentials while in prison”, the 46-year-old entertainer must confront his past and level with the people of Jamaica about his drug conviction and the road

MORE IN FEB 2019 EDITON



RAS ITAL MEK OR BREAK

Rasta nah fi mix up ina drug dealing thing. But really mi feel him was set up. eem like every great man pun this earth down to Jesus Christ, Salasie I, JFK ect had to pay a cost for enlightening the people dem. Peter Tosh Bob Marley and the list can go on. Question is WHO NEXT? Mi Curious fi hear di end!

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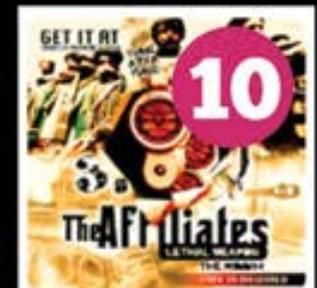
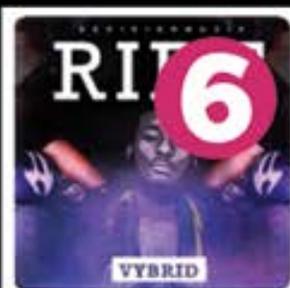
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EXCLUSIVE DR GITTENS INTERVIEW

TPI DOMINATES SSS ISLANDS AND REGION WITH THE BUSINESS CONSULTANCY FOR SUCCESS SERVICES

WE HAVE been following the success of Dr Gittens since her ground breaking leadership and trail blazing efforts in training and development at the University of St. Martin. In this months edition of Cultural Xpression we get a chance to touch base with her and get a better understanding of her plans for 2019.

What do you attribute your staying power?

First, I am honored and blessed that my path has lead me here to be a part of beautiful communities of not only St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba, but the other neighboring islands as well. It is a privilege to serve and be socially responsible to communities where you reside. Over the years, I have hone my success by being active in reinvesting and doing my part to promote and uplift the way in which businesses function and operate to ensure that they achieve great success and attain higher heights. I am grounded and humbled with my achievements and my clients are truly a priority for TPI; their success is our success.

What are some of the current impacts that TPI has made?

I am happy to share that TPI and its affiliate companies and divisions are strongly supporting the business communities of the SSS islands and region by providing an access to suites of globally accredited courses and other highly seek after products and services such as Motivational and Guest speaking services and being able to go in to companies and provide extensive assessments and analysis reporting for customized program development. We have recently concluded the Annual Saba Hospitality and Tourism event for the Saba Government Entity, The Client Relationship Management workshops for the business communities of Statia and Saba sponsored by their respective Chamber of Commerce offices, The Student Safety Awareness program co-developed with ECE foundation in Statia and of course of highly successful Customer Service Week program co-branded with our partners at the Holland House in St. Maarten.



Dr. Natasha Gittens

What can we expect from TPI and its affiliates in the near future and beyond?

We will continue to coach, council and mentor our clients to keeping reaching for higher heights, we walk the talk at TPI. We are rolling out more mint-designed programs such as Hospitality and Tourism Mobile academy for High Schools, Hospitality and Tourism Consultancy program, My Consultancy program for small businesses with a focus on developing Women leaders to dominate within their respective fields and so much more. We are consistently trying to remain relevant and cutting-edge.

Dr. Gittens is the author of the best seller, *The Pie Philosophy*, and the President & CEO of Training Professionals International Firm, (TPI) and President of the parent

company Customer Service Mobile Academy, (CSMA). She is also the President and Founder of the Youth Empowered for Success Foundation, (YES) and the Founder of the 1st Annual St. Maarten Customer Service Week established in September of 2017. The Entity of the Saba Government recognized the value of Customer Service Week and adopted the program in June of 2018 under the leadership of Dr. Gittens and her team.

Dr. Gittens is a well known motivational Presenter, Keynote speaker, Business Strategist and Training Guru throughout the world. Her experience and art of presenting leaves audiences on the edge of their seats as she speaks about, Customer Service Excellence, Employee Morale, Learning Organization Strategies, Professional Development and Hospitality & Tourism Best practices for diverse organizations internationally.

DAMASEAU AND JOHNSON LEAD TOURISM PRODUCT ASSESSMENT

PHILIPSBURG

— Vice President of the Collectivity and President of the St. Martin Tourist Office, Ms Valerie Damaseau, and Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Traffic & Telecommunication (TEATT), on Dutch St. Maarten the Honourable Stuart Johnson, led a delegation of tourism specialists on an island-wide assessment of the St. Maarten tourism product on Thursday December 20.

The island-wide tour now puts substance to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which was signed a year ago as an agreement to market St. Maarten jointly.

After the tour Minister Johnson said, the idea behind the tour is to work directly with stakeholders on the island to find ways of improving the way we sell our product. "St. Maarten has a wide variety of services and products, and many are some of our best-kept secrets. But to get to the next level, we have to think of marketing the destination from the standpoint of inclusion, ensuring that everyone who



From the left Gianira Arrindell Marketing officer for St. Maarten Tourist Bureau (STB), Aida Weinum Director General for the French Tourist Bureau, the Honourable Stuart Johnson Minister of Tourism, Economic Affairs, Traffic & Telecommunication (TEATT), First Vice President of the Collectivity and President of the St. Martin Tourist Office, Ms Valerie Damaseau, Interim Director of the STB May-Ling Chun, and Celine Euson-Gumbs of the French Tourist Office.

has something to offer our visitors, gets the exposure they need, as this benefits the island and moves our economy forward" said Johnson.

First VP Damaseau said she was pleased with the efforts both sides of the island were finally putting into strengthening the MOU as it is "a significant step in the right direction." She said, "Marketing our destination collectively makes good financial sense, as we are able to pull together

our resources and maximise our reach. We also have a major benefit when we speak to especially larger airlines we want to attract to the island because we can sell a combined number of hotel rooms for example which is a more attractive offer to them once they start considering offering our destination to their passengers." VP Damaseau has extended congratulations to those who managed to reopen. "I want to encourage

those also who are trying to reopen their business, as I know it can be challenging, but know that we are all in this together, because tourism, is you, tourism is me, tourism is all of us," said Damaseau.

The two government officials along with several members of their respective Tourism Offices carried out inspections at hotels, bars and other tourist attractions on both sides of the island. The intention is to use the informa-

tion gathered during the tour to update the destination's marketing information and to provide guests with accurate information about what is available on St. Maarten.

The tour started around 9:00 a.m. at the Simpson Bay Market where Minister Johnson gave information about plans to erect ten permanent structures and an improved bathroom facility for vendors to offer their services to visitors and residents. "We hope to be able to construct in the near future and we are looking at how best to relocate or shift the vendors operating now to a temporary location for both the Simpson Bay and Philipsburg operation," explained Johnson. Once construction of the Market Place starts, the project should take three months to be completed. He also indicated that the Roxy Beach project next to the Simpson Bay Market is slated to be completed early in 2019.

The next stop was the famous Toppers Rum Distillery where "Crazy Dave" told the delegation about their latest large shipment of Topper's Rum labelled "Hand Made in St. Maarten" which was shipped to the United States of America for distribution. The distillery is a favourite stop for tour operators who service the cruise lines and is also a favourite for many residents and guests at local resorts who especially love the personalised Topper's rum bottle options offered at the distillery. During the tour, the group were told about the six commercial Toppers rum products and the many fun flavours that were created especially for the Christmas holidays.

The tour proceeded towards Phippsburg stopping first at the lookout point on Cole Bay Hill, then at the L'Esperance Hotel in Cay Hill. At the lookout point, Minister Johnson and First VP Damaseau learnt first-hand from a returning family of tourists, how happy they were to finally be able to return to the island since it was devastated by hurricane Irma and Maria in September 2017. The Moore family said they travelled from Philadelphia to Charlotte then to St. Maarten and it took six months to get the booking. They even bought a book with photos of the aftermath of Irma once they got here to see for themselves what destruction had been caused to their "second home." Before the storm, they came to the island at least twice annually and enjoyed the direct flight options that they hope will be returning soon.

Johnson told his delegation that some new plans are being worked on, but will have to be finalised in close consultation with the family that owns the property where the flag and statue were erected. The plans will primarily improve the existing structure to make it easier to access, safer and more information based, and make it a more attractive national monument. The L'Esperance Hotel was extensively damaged during the hurricanes but has since reinforced its swimming pool and renovated its 22 rooms. It was the next stop for the group. The hotel's rooms are complete with kitchenettes, and there is complimentary Wi-Fi service throughout the property and a large sun-room and a lounge for relaxation.

After visiting L'Es-

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS AND AIRBNB PARTNER TO IMPROVE TOURISM SECTOR

ROAD TOWN, British Virgin Islands, Monday December 24, 2018 – Homestay provider Airbnb has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the British Virgin Islands (BVI) to collaborate on areas of common interest.

The BVI is the latest Caribbean destination to formalize an agreement with Airbnb, with 16 collaboration or voluntary tax collection agreements signed within the last two years.

Through the

partnership with BVI, Airbnb will explore providing support through multiple initiatives, including Airbnb's Open Homes Programme.

Commenting on the signing of the agreement, BVI Director of Tourism Sharon Flax Brutus said: "We are pleased to be a formal part of the Airbnb network. We think Airbnb properties present a fabulous opportunity for home share guests to be able to experience authen-

tic British Virgin Islands culture and lifestyle." Airbnb plays an increasingly important role in BVI's tourism sector with over 100 hosts throughout the archipelagic nation earning substantial annual receipts.

"Airbnb is proud to partner with the BVI Tourist Board to diversify the local tourism product through home sharing," said Carlos Munoz, Campaign Manager, Public Policy and Communications for the Caribbean and Central



America. "This partnership will help to strengthen tourism development, one of the nation's largest economic sectors, and generate economic opportunity throughout the islands."

Over 2,000 guests booked accommodation through Airbnb between July 2017 and July 2018, with an average stay of four days. The income generated by these visits has

helped Virgin Islanders rebuild after the catastrophic 2017 hurricane season that crippled the islands and accounted for more than US\$3.6 billion in damages.

Airbnb says it will continue to collaborate with governments in the region to support healthy tourism growth through destination marketing and inclusive, sustainable tourism initiatives that democratize the tourism product and empower locals.

DAMASEAU AND JOHNSON LEAD TOURISM....FROM PG 12

perance and attending the inaugural call for the new state of the art Cruise Ship "Celebrity Edge" at Port St. Maarten, the group travelled to French St. Maarten where they were treated to lunch, and a brief overview of the special offers for guests at the new "Kakao Beach restaurant opened four days before on Orient Beach.

First VP Damaseau took the opportunity to explain some of the process involved in reopening the Orient Bay local restaurants. She said the Beach is now "back", but the government wants to ensure that the local restaurants are opened as a priority. She said that a bid has been extended for local contractors to build the new facilities that are to come at Orient Bay. The French government has also approved a "Bay Watch" lifeguard service that will be stationed in the centre of Orient Beach and

will patrol the entire beach to ensure visitor safety, in the event of an emergency.

The group visited several other locations on French St. Martin including the Tizon Parfumerie which offers classes in perfume making and options of creating your own fragrance, and the Grand Case Beach Hotel which is still recovering from hurricane damage. Grand Case Beach Hotel has made significant progress in its reconstruction. The hotel now has its own dedicated fibre optic cable, providing 15 MPS per second free Internet. It boasts several beautifully designed side table lamps made from recycled storm material, solar lighting complements of the French Commune, a new beachside restaurant "Baranco." Soon to come is a bunker-style building to house a state of the art conference room, which will double as a shelter for guests and

staff during a storm, and will have a rooftop tennis court.

The group also visited Le Temps de Cerises an eight-suite hotel on the Grand Case Beach. During their visit to Grand Case First VP Dama-

seau spoke of the long-awaited return of Mardi De Grand Case. The first event for 2019 will be held on February 5th. Mardi De Grand Case features a wide range of entertainment, arts and crafts and some

of the most exquisite culinary dishes in the Caribbean on display in a Carnival-style atmosphere.

The final stop on tour was a visit to the Colimbier Tradition, a local guava berry retail out which is run

by a local St. Martin family who makes and bottle their own products for resale. The facility, located in the heart of Marigot the French Capital, sells a wide variety of home-made liquor.

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MILLION-DOLLAR BUSINESS IDEAS YOU CAN LAUNCH FOR CHEAP (OR EVEN FREE) PT 4

By Jason Abbruzzese @ mashable.com

30. Window Cleaning

If you're like most of us, window cleaning is my least favorite chore around the house. It's tedious and never looks "clean." That's why I have no problem hiring a window cleaning service for both my home and business. Like a cleaning service, you have the option to do residential or commercial prop-



erties and it doesn't require much capital to start.

31. Upholstering/Furniture Repair

Do you have a

piece of furniture that you love, but it's looking a little ragged? Instead of purchasing a replacement you could have it upholstered. And, it's pretty solid business idea

as well. You can also repair and upsell used furniture for those who prefer quality pieces of furniture at a decent price.

32. Custom Tailoring

Since people are becoming more conscientious about their looks they realize that there's no such thing as one-size-fits all - particularly businessmen and women.

MORE IN FEB 2019 EDITON



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Dr. Natasha Gittens, Ph.D., CHT., CHE.
President and CEO of TPI and CSMA



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NAGICO-SPONSORED 'ATLANTIC DISCOVERY' CROSSES FINISH LINE IN WORLD'S TOUGHEST ROW

IT TOOK the four men 40 days, almost 1,000 hours rowing, nearly 1 million calories, 700 litres of water, 52,000 watts of solar power, unimaginable inner strength and a large dose of humour to row the 3,000 miles, unsupported, from the Canaries to the Caribbean island of Antigua.

The distinctive green NAGICO branded ocean rowing boat, Ellida, rowed into English Harbour at (insert date and time), to complete the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge in sixth place, taking 40 days, 23 hours and 33 minutes.

The sinewy, tanned and bearded men were given an emotional, rousing welcome from their families and over 100 supporters and friends of NAGICO Insurances clients, partners and local supporters who came out to welcome the team home.

NAGICO's Chairman Imran McSood Amjad greeted the team as they stepped off the boat: "We are very proud to be associated with Atlantic Discovery. These men have embraced the extreme hardships they have

faced at sea and found the strength to triumph. Their resilience and teamwork is commendable - I consider Ben, Cam, Isaac and Jack to be part of the NAGICO family."

"It is also an honour for me to symbolically counter-sign the Excess of Loss Treaty between NAGICO Group and Swiss Re which Cameron Parker signed in the mid-Atlantic in a world first on behalf of Swiss Re." Cameron Parker is Captain of the rowing team and Head P&C Structured Solutions Continental Europe at Swiss Re.

Cameron said that the moment of arriving in Antigua to meet Mac, Kyria and the NAGICO team was what he had been looking forward to most. "The journey was the toughest challenge each of us has ever done. We've learned a great deal about ourselves as individuals, and as a team. What motivated us on the row is all the support we have received from everyone. Messages, encouragement and donations - this has been the fuel that has kept us going. We wanted to make you all proud and



celebrate with you at the finish."

The team did the row to raise £60K (USD 80K) for Multiple Sclerosis (MS), which affects 2.5 million people worldwide. Ben's mother Rose was diagnosed with MS while her son was still at school. "My mum has lived with MS for 18 years. Every day is a frustrating struggle, yet she overcomes her symptoms with sheer determination and grit. She has taught me that one grows as a person by overcoming adversity. I reminded myself during the row that no matter the challenges we faced, my

mum's journey has been even more difficult."

Finishing this race means that the team will receive promised donations to their chosen charities from the Hiscox Foundation, Lyme Bay Consulting and

a personal donation from Kyria Ali, Group Chief Strategy and Development Officer and the staff of NAGICO, boosting funds raised so far to £24,000 (USD 31,200).

"We are truly proud of Team Atlan-

tic Discovery - what they have accomplished is no easy feat and is quite frankly, awe-inspiring. They have demonstrated how ordinary people can do extraordinary things and reminded us all of the power of humanity. Our staff in all 21 territories closely followed the team's journey. We are honoured to have been a part of this amazing story and created history as well with Swiss Re." said Kyria Ali, NAGICO's Chief Strategy and Development Officer.

Donations continue to be accepted and the team hope to reach their target in the next few weeks.

The remaining 21 ocean-rowing vessels are still to complete the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge over the next few weeks.

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