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# St. Thomas Real Estate *reviews*

Featuring Real Estate Market Updates  
and Local News of St. Thomas, USVI

**FEBRUARY 2014**

## Fresh off the Farm

**Y**ou had to love the vibes up in the hills of Bordeaux on the weekend of January 18-19. Islanders gathered for the 17th annual Rastafari Agricultural and Cultural Food Fair where produce came fresh from the farms and local drinks and dishes were served up Ital style.

Hosted by St. Thomas farmers (organized as We Grow Food, Inc.), the fair offered not only homegrown produce and vegetarian foods but also local arts, crafts, poetry and music. You could take in a beekeeping demonstration or learn to make tofu. You could brush-up on mulching and composting or familiarize yourself with drip irrigation. Children had a special section with demos just for them.

Grantley Samuel of G.L.G. Plants and Produce on St. Croix arrived by fishing boat, bringing avocados, cucumbers, star apples, local honey, sapodilla, chocolate fruit and an orange-grapefruit cross called chirongas. "I sold it all!" he said. It was his first trip to the fair, and he has vowed to become a regular.

"What a welcoming environment! You can feel the love," said Samuel. "The St. Thomas farming community is tight; it feels like home." He acknowledges the challenges such as steep land that confront St. Thomian farmers. "Still, they manage to produce great stuff," he said.

At sundown, local musicians took the stage. "The nights were awesome. We have talent here. I'm talking about real cultural reggae," Samuel said. Bands played until 'round about midnight.

*This newsletter written by Anne Salafia  
[annesalafia@gmail.com](mailto:annesalafia@gmail.com)*



*Farmer Grantley Samuel.*

## Message from Jeyan...

**I** just adore February on St. Thomas! It's my favorite month. Pardon me, all you who are stuck in icy conditions and record cold climates, but I must sing our praises. (Perhaps you should book an airline ticket, right now.)

Our island breezes have picked up. We enjoy cool evenings and brilliant days—perfect beach weather. Rainbows decorate the morning skies, and a million bright stars light up the nights. Everyone seems to be riding on Cloud 9! How can you help it?

Presidents' Day weekend always brings a flurry of visitors; I love to see their expressions as they deplane and step into our warm tropical air. Big smiles! They've shed their ear muffs and slipped into sandals. Out come the big straw hats; they are ready for a good time in the sun. If I weren't so busy selling real estate, I would throw on my bathing suit and join them. But our Coldwell Banker Stout Realty phones are ringing off the hook, and I'm having a wonderful time showing houses!

Speaking of visitors, the United States Power Squadrons called on St. Thomas during its Centennial Cruise, as you'll read. Members of the Boston Yacht Club founded the Power Squadrons when more and more people began using power boats, back around 1912. They organized specifically to teach boating safety and education—as they still do. At the urging of Franklin D. Roosevelt, assistant secretary of the Navy at the time, the group incorporated in 1914. Our own St. Thomas Sail and Power Squadron boasts 27 members delighted to show off the island.

I hope everyone had a great Presidents' Day and a lovely Valentine's Day. Bring your true love to St. Thomas!



*Jeyan Stout*

*Jeyan*

Jeyan Stout, GRI, CRS, e-Pro,  
Previews Property Specialist  
Coldwell Banker Stout Realty

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# St. Thomas in Profile...

## CESARE BRUNI of Bollicine

by Anne Salafia

Cesare Bruni started in the hotel and restaurant industry in Italy when he was twelve. He was cut-out for the business. After all, he'd been cooking alongside his grandmother since he was four. (The two considered cooking as play-time together.) Now, some 38 restaurants and a resort later, he's seen the world.

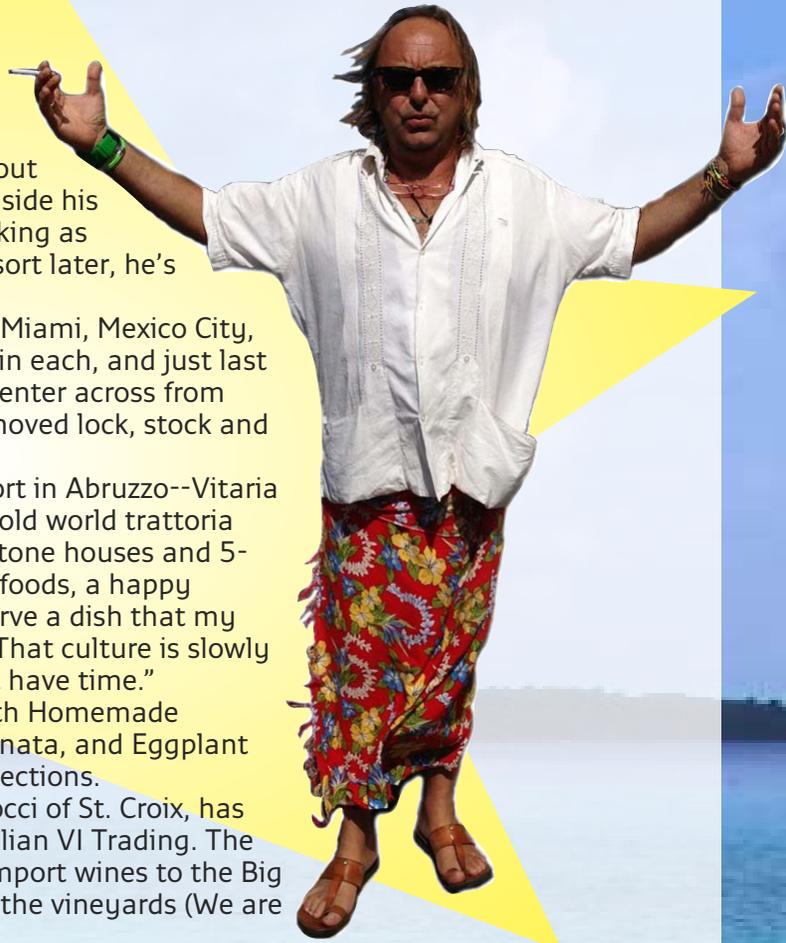
"My career has taken me to New York, the Hamptons, Miami, Mexico City, Madrid and Abruzzo," Bruni said. He opened restaurants in each, and just last month, he opened Bollicine in Al Cohen's Hill Shopping Center across from Mango Tango Gallery on St. Thomas. "I like it here! I've moved lock, stock and barrel," he said.

Bruni brought over the chef from his mountaintop resort in Abruzzo--Vitaria Country Residences--and together they serve wonderful old world trattoria foods. "I'm not going after the sophistication of the old stone houses and 5-star dishes," Bruni said. He prefers simple, earthy Italian foods, a happy atmosphere, and a good glass of wine. "I would rather serve a dish that my grandmother taught me than the fancy stuff," he said. "That culture is slowly getting lost because the younger generation just doesn't have time."

At Bollicine, you'll find dishes like Green Fettuccine with Homemade Bolognese Sauce, Pork Tenderloin with Mushrooms Caponata, and Eggplant Parmigiana, not to mention lots of antipasta and fish selections.

No stranger to the USVI, Bruni, along with Pierto Bartocci of St. Croix, has imported wines to the big island for 12 years through Italian VI Trading. The two co-own Via Della Pace restaurant in New York and import wines to the Big Apple, too. Bruni brings vino to St. Thomas directly from the vineyards (We are Wine, inc.), foregoing middlemen and import taxes.

Enjoy a taste of Italy (Cesare Bruni style) at Bollicine. Or slip off to his mountain resort in Abruzzo and just say Ciao. [bollicinestt@gmail.com](mailto:bollicinestt@gmail.com) and [vitaira.biz](http://vitaira.biz).



## Much Ado about Power Squadrons

When the Nieuw Amsterdam docked in Crown Bay on February 6th, the St. Thomas Sail and Power Squadron came out in full regalia. Commander Roxanne Lettsome and her squadron welcomed 355 members of the US Power Squadrons who were at sea celebrating the 100th Anniversary of USPS. Then the St. Thomians threw a party—a ceremony, actually.

And Governor John deJongh, Jr. sent legislation naming February 6th United States Power Squadron Day.

Amid steel pans, cultural and ritual dancers, and flags flying at Magens Bay, the Honorable Stanley Smith, Commissioner of Sports, Parks and Recreation read and delivered the Governor's proclamation to Chief Commander Robert Baldrige, who



Photo by Steve Erickson

stood by in proper beach attire.

"I was honored to represent the Power Squadrons and receive the valued proclamation from the Virgin Islands, and I was impressed that so many dignitaries were present," said Baldrige. "The hospitality was just tremendous."

Officials included Delegate to Congress Donna Christensen, Senators Clarence Payne and

Trengza Roach, Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Tourism Monique Sibilly Hodge, and Diana Brown, Special Events Coordinator with Tourism. The U.S. Coast Guard, its Auxiliary, and the St. Thomas Rescue participated, too. Everyone had a ball.

"Our goal was to highlight our beautiful people and lovely island and to make St. Thomas a port-of-call they will always remember and come back to," said Commander Lettsome, acknowledging the Department of Tourism, the VI Port Authority and the West Indian Company Limited for their hand in the fun.

"The St. Thomas Sail and Power Squadron is our 'Squadron in Paradise!'" said Chief Commander Baldrige.



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## Jasmine Campbell Represents V.I. in Olympics

Like her father before her (Albertville, 1992), Jasmine Campbell represented the Virgin Islands in the 2014 Winter Olympics. The 22-year old Alpine skier competed in the slalom and giant slalom events, as did dad John Campbell.

Born on St. John, Jasmine lived on our sister island until she was nine and ferried to St. Thomas each day for classes. When the family moved to Idaho, Jasmine took up ski-racing.

During opening ceremonies, Jasmine proudly carried the V.I. flag for all the world to see, as she paraded around the stadium in Sochi. According to the V.I. Olympic Committee, she found the experience "surreal."

"I was able to meet with tons of interesting people from countries I know I'll never be able to pronounce. I felt like I could travel the globe in just 100 meters," the Committee reported her saying. "It was a real honor and privilege to be a part of that."