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St. Thomas Real Estate *reviews*

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

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Taylor Canfield Awarded 'VI Sailor of the Year'

When native son Taylor Canfield captured the 2013 World Match Racing Championship title, the Virgin Islands Sailing Association created an award in his honor. The association named him 'VI Sailor of the Year.'

The 24-year-old Canfield and his team, USOne, competed in six events around the globe—all part of the World Match Racing Tour. They raced in Germany, Korea, Sweden, Chicago, Bermuda, and Malaysia. The youngest skipper on the tour, Canfield faced stiff competition with skippers from England and New Zealand.

"Racing in the America's Cup, along with all the Match Races, is my goal" said Canfield.

Canfield skippered optimist dinghies at the St. Thomas Yacht Club when he was six. At first he wasn't sure he liked sailing. But friends and family egged him on, and he gave the sport a second chance.

When Canfield was 13, Bermuda hosted a Junior Gold Cup for optimists. "They invited the best opti sailors from many nations so that kids could compete while the actual Gold Cup was going on," Canfield said. There, he watched St. Thomian Peter Holmberg match racing. "I knew I wanted to do that kind of sailing!"

Peter Holmberg became his mentor.

Attributing his success to growing up in the VI where he could sail every day in 85 degree weather, Canfield also credits close friends, Cy Thompson and Thomas Barrows. "We pushed each other from optimists all the way through college," Canfield said. (At Boston College, Canfield won five national collegiate championships.)

Now a professional, Canfield inspires young Virgin Islanders. Last fall, he and his girlfriend, Stephanie Roble, gave a match racing clinic (organized by Peter Holmberg) for high school kids. "I get back to the islands whenever I can!" he said.

*This newsletter written by Anne Salafia
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Photo courtesy of AWMRT.

Message from Jeyan...

Happy New Year, Friends! Here's wishing you each the very best in 2014.

Don't you just adore a new year? I throw my arms open to the possibilities! We banish the coconut tarts and swear off the coquito. We head to the gym or dive into the great outdoors. We pickup our tennis rackets or put on our jogging shoes (in some cases, walking shoes). We break out the kayaks or register for a sailing course.

January is a great time for new adventures. (Check our story on ziplining; it sounds like fun and is all the rage.) One friend has signed-up for a scuba-diving refresher course. Another has pledged to take advantage of UVI's policy of free admission for seniors. Shall we brush up on our golf game? St. Thomas is brimming with opportunities.

Several new acquaintances, quickly becoming friends, have resolved to spend winters on St. Thomas. Some plan a full-time move here. Makes sense!

My own resolve? Same as last year—I am set on giving you unsurpassed real estate service. My heart is in real estate; I am dedicated. (Of course, I may harbor a few other resolves...)

Before we bid 2013 farewell, I want to congratulate our young St. Thomian sailors. Taylor Canfield won the World Match Racing Tour, as you'll read. Way to go, Taylor!

Our junior sailors raced brilliantly in the Orange Bowl International Youth Regatta in Miami last month. Hats off to Paige Clarke, Scott McKenzie, Colin Brego, Thomas Walden, Taylor Ladd, Amanda Engeman, Nicholas Gartner, Graceann Nicolosi, Ryan Hunter, Teddy and Mia Nicolosi, Julien van den Driessche, Mateo Blasi and Robert Hunter!

Best of luck in 2014, everyone.



Jeyan Stout

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St. Thomas in Profile...

JANE COOMBES

by Anne Salafia

Thirty-three years ago, Jane Coombes and a man named Smokey set out to explore the Caribbean. Coombes took a hiatus from teaching and put aside her doctoral work in English at the University of Texas at El Paso; Smokey Pratt surrendered his position as manager and cook at Johnny's Outback in Carrizozo, New Mexico. He left behind his music scene.

Neither knew they would marry and live all these years on St. Thomas. Or that they would open perhaps the finest art gallery in Caribbean. Or that collectors would schedule trips around shows at Mango Tango Gallery.

"My goal was to travel," said Coombes. At first, she bought Italian pareos and sold them through the islands. Later, she settled into teaching, and Smokey resumed his profession as a chef. But when Prinair announced a \$1500 ticket for yearlong travel in the Caribbean, Coombes took to island-hopping on weekends.

"I noticed that other islands had an art presence and that St. Thomas only catered to tourists," said Coombs who grew up with an eye for art. She never dreamed she would forego teaching, but... Coombes and Pratt flipped a coin. Would they open a restaurant or an art gallery?

The toss left Pratt evenings to play flute and harmonica with his band, Two Blue Shoes. He played for art openings, too.

In business for 25 years, Mango Tango features artists such as Don Dahlke, the late Kathy Carlson, W.B. Thompson, Mandy Thody and Brian Murphy. Their work hangs in homes across the Caribbean and throughout the U.S. "Art enriches lives," Coombs said.

She now divides her time between the gallery and teaching English Composition and Research Writing at UVI. "The two activities I love best are teaching and promoting art, and I am doing both!" said Coombes.

Smokey Pratt passed away last July. His whimsical art graces the gallery.



Show Schedule at Mango Tango

Receptions, from 5:30-8:30, include live music and rum punch which add to the fun of viewing art and meeting the artists.

January 24th: An Art Jamboree featuring over 12 artists, the show includes debuts of Cuban contemporary artist, Angel Rivero Sierra who signs as "Andy" and mixed-media artist Mary Rodriguez whose work celebrates the joy of music. Her process involves layers of acrylic on plastic in rich collage finesse.

February 28th: *Purveyor of Oil Souls*, a solo show by Mel McCuddin. The internationally recognized McCuddin is a figurative expressionist who "finds his images in the paint." He plays loosely with his paint and figures evolve to express his commentary on the human condition.

March 28th: Two shows:

Solitary Artist: Extraordinary Art features a retrospective of the paintings and drawings of local artist, Erik Pederson. A "cerebral artist" unconcerned with the commercial market, Pedersen has earned two art residencies and has been included in museum shows in the States.

Ceramic Splendor showcases new works of Mandy Thody. Thody works mainly in clay sculpture and is influenced by diverse cultures--from African to Art Nouveau. Her pieces, typically of the human face and figure, incorporate elements of mythology, fantasy, and the local environment.

We've Got Zip!

Tree Limin' Extreme, the only zipline tour in the Virgin Islands, promises the "ultimate zip trip." Thrill seekers are delighted. So are visitors, cruise passengers and islanders who love the bird's eye views of Magen's Bay and the British Virgins and all their wonderful cays. Trip Advisor gives the operation 5-Stars.

"We are the most sought after attraction on St. Thomas," said Drew Bowers, office manager at Tree Limin' Extreme. "Our park is designed for the family. We've had youngsters aged five or six as well as octogenarians with a bucket list."

The course consists of eight platforms connected by six ziplines and two canopy bridges. A guide zips ahead, then assists his group with stops at each platform. Most linger, taking in the outstanding views. The last zip offers a unique finish—a yoyo zipline. Go backwards, go forwards.

Tree Limin' Extreme guarantees an adrenaline rush. "Whenever you step off a 40 ft. platform, well....And the rope and cable bridges do swing," Bowers said. He vouches for safety precautions like redundant lines of galvanized aircraft cable and a superior braking system.

The Bryan are hands-on owner-managers. "Their hearts are into it, and that shows in the success of our property," said Bowers. Visit ziplinesstthomas.com.



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