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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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Jazz in the Park

St. Thomas kicked off November with everyone's favorite: Jazz in the Park. Some headed to Roosevelt Park straight from work on Friday the 1st; others spruced up and collected dancing shoes and lawn chairs. Families arrived with children ready to cut a rug in the grass. All came for a good time, Virgin Islands style.

And all wanted to catch the jazz vocalist and saxophonist who had come to town—Camille Thurman. After all, St. Thomas is known for its ear.



“Camille Thurman was a real treat. She wowed the audience of hard core jazz enthusiasts with classic standards and contemporary sounds,” said Karen Nelson-Hughes, Community Relations Manager at International Capital Management Company.

International Capital Management Company started Jazz in the Park in 2011. Wanting to make a positive impact on the community, ICMC created an event certain to engage all cultures, ages, and economic backgrounds. (Not to mention jazz buffs.) This time, ICMC added local vendors so that attendees might enjoy dinner and drinks in the park, too.

“There are many jazz lovers on the island. They traverse the regular jazz hotspots such as Tavern on the Waterfront and Northside Bistro, and they eagerly anticipate our event,” Nelson-Hughes said. ICMC, presents Jazz in the Park four times a year—in February, April, July and November. Stay tuned for the 2014 line-up.

*This newsletter written by Anne Salafia
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Message from Jeyan...



Jeyan Stout

If you've missed our newsletter these past two months, let me tell you why. We took advantage of quieter times on St. Thomas to redesign our website. You'll like it. We've added my blog and real estate tips for buyers

and sellers. Of course, you can view the beautiful properties we list—not to mention vacation villas and long term rental properties. I hope you'll visit.

Now season is upon us! You run into music and entertainment at every turn. The Reichold Center has launched its 2013-2014 schedule, and the line-up looks fabulous. The day after we heard Camille Thurman at Jazz in the Park (Thank you International Capital Management Company!), the Reichold Center brought us *Invincible: A Glorious Tribute to the King of Pop*. The production paid homage to Michael Jackson, starting with his boyhood days in the Jackson 5 and covering his career from there. That same night at Antilles School, the Forum presented Sybarite5 performing a repertoire that ran from Mozart to the British band, Radiohead.

You have to love St. Thomas! One night, we hear Jazz, the next it's Pop. (Or mixed-bag.) On November 30th, Tito Puento, Jr. brings his Latin sounds to the island. And haven't I been hearing more steel pan lately?

Here on St. Thomas, you can put on your feathers whenever you like. We've got theater; we've got art openings. How about the 44th Annual Las Vegas Night Fundraiser at Frenchman's Reef on December 7th? It benefits the V. I. Montessori School, so you gamble for a great cause.

We have so much to be thankful for, not the least of which is our beautiful island in the Caribbean. Happy Thanksgiving!

Jeyan

Jeyan Stout, GRI, CRS, e-Pro,
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SCOTT BRADLEY My Brother's Workshop



by Anne Salafia

Seven years ago, a retired industrial engineer and his pastor set out to forge a path for troubled youth. Scott Bradley and Reverend Jeffrey Gargano of the St. Thomas Reform Church wanted to offer hope and direction. They founded My Brother's Workshop and began a program of counseling, mentorship and life-skill training on Back Street in Charlotte Amalie. The reverend has relocated, but Scott Bradley and My Brother's Workshop are going strong—thanks to team effort.

"Our school system doesn't offer a vocational program," said Bradley, acknowledging that youth unemployment spells trouble. "We give these kids a way to make a living."

My Brother's Workshop trains at-risk 16-24 year-olds in carpentry, woodworking, masonry, plumbing, painting, and electrical work. A part of the National Center for Construction Education and Research program, it certifies students. "After the initial three months of core training, the kids go into a program of paid work. They learn something of what the world is like," said Bradley. "Our training enables them to function in a work environment." Participants can also study service, retail, cooking, baking, housekeeping and maintenance.

As Program Director, Bradley teaches classes and focuses on psychological development. "Once you get involved here, you are family. We provide that sense of community," he said. "When you boil it down, they're just broken children with scars from a bad childhood." After the kids have graduated, Bradley maintains connections and welcomes them back for advice. They stop by, as family would. They come to say thanks or to show-off a new car, to pass pleasantries.

Now a 5013C company, My Brother's Workshop has moved to Tutu Mall and celebrates its first female graduate: Latoi Henddrington, furniture and cabinetry-making. Visit mybrothersworkshop.org and see the students' handiwork. Hear the pride in their voices. See it in their eyes.

Ridge to Reef Farm, it's Organic

Americans have joined the bandwagon for a better world: solar power, organic foods, a healthier environment. But because farm life isn't for everyone, many of us to to Nate Olive and Ridge to Reef Farm.

The only USDA certified organic farm in the VI, Ridge to Reef runs two off-the-grid sites on St. Croix and delivers produce weekly to shareholders in its Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program on St. Thomas and St. John. The farm harvests on Wednesday evenings and delivers on Thursday mornings. Shareholders (not "customers") collect their veggies at Barefoot Buddha in Havensight and at Giff Hill School on St. John.

"The program is geared to get organic foods into the kitchen," said Olive, Director of Ridge to Reef Farm. "Our goal is to feed 1% of the USVI with local organic produce." Olive figures the farm is a fifth of the way there. He considers shareholders a part of the farm. "We engage kindred spirits in our weekly joint venture."

Shareholders join by the season, paying upfront for 15 weeks of deliveries. Every Thursday, they get a box of organic vegetables, roots, spices and herbs worth \$35.00. Olive borrowed the model from an Austrian farming community of the 1970s. Weary of farmers shipping local corn elsewhere, the community paid growers in advance to secure produce for themselves. It worked for everyone.

Ridge to Reef embraces not only organic farming but also farm tourism and Virgin Island heritage. It welcomes visitors; it holds Slow Down Dinners, tours, and workshops on farming, nature and culture. This month, National Geographic Traveler featured the farm. See ridge2reef.org.



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New Tax Breaks for Homeowners

If you are thinking of building a home or renovating an existing one in the Virgin Islands, consider "visitability." Under the new Visitable Design and Incentive Act, homeowners who build or remodel their homes to be visitable by people with disabilities are eligible for a ten-year 20 percent cut in property taxes. Wider doors, stair-free entries, and a bathroom on the first floor constitute visibility.

"Making these improvements is a great way to build equity," said Senator Shawn Malone. He said that "as our population ages, visitable homes will be even more sought after."

The Act authorizes the DPNR Commissioner to waive permitting fees for visitability projects. To learn more, contact the DPNR division of Building Permits at 340-774-3320.