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## 71st Crucian Christmas Festival Concludes with Cultural Showcase and Record Attendance

Department of Tourism and Division of Festivals celebrate successful conclusion of St. Croix's signature cultural event spanning twelve days with rich array of activities

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Aerial shot of the Crucian Christmas Festival Village, dubbed "MokoVille" this year in honor of Willard John, the iconic cultural ambassador. By. DIVISION OF FESTIVALS

The V.I. Department of Tourism, in collaboration with the Division of Festivals, has concluded the 71st Crucian Christmas Festival, a cultural celebration known as the signature event for St. Croix. Starting on December 26 and spanning twelve days, the festival offered a wide array of events showcasing the island's rich cultural heritage.

Kicking off in Frederiksted Village, the festival's lineup included the Prince, Princess, Dutch, and Duchess Show, and the Queen Pageant, culminating in the energetic Soca Monarch competition. In a first for the festival, the Kid Ville event was dedicated to the island's youngest revelers, providing them with their own night of celebration.

The festivities continued with International Cultural Night, which began on December 29th, offering seven nights of free concerts. The event featured a mix of local and international musical talents, including performances by Cool Session, Charlie Aponte, Destra, Nadia Batson, Adam O, Capleton, Edwin Yearwood & Krosfyah, Karnage, and Dexta Daps.

A highlight of the festival was the annual Food Fair held at the Frederiksted Pier, where patrons enjoyed the best of Crucian cuisine and participated in the "war of tarts", voting for their favorite tart flavor among coconut, pineapple, and guava (guava won).

The festival's final days saw an increase in participants and onlookers for the J'ouvert, the Children's Parade, and the Adults Parade, with this year's attendance reaching record highs, according to D.O.T. Participants adorned in colorful and ornate costumes celebrated the Caribbean heritage of the island with music, dance, and pageantry.

D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte praised the festival's success and the community's support, noting the significance of such events in elevating the territory's profile. He acknowledged the Division of Festivals' efforts in enhancing the festival experience and setting new standards for cultural celebrations.

The festival's successful run culminated with a post-parade fireworks display and Uber Soca Night at the Frederiksted Village, featuring international AfroBeats star Davido and Caribbean Music Awards Soca Performer of the Year Mr. Killa.

Ian Turnbull, director of Festivals, commended the rich display of culture throughout the festival, from the pageantry to the food fair, and J'ouvert to the parades.

The Department of Tourism and Division of Festivals extended their thanks to partner agencies, including the V.I. Police Department, V.I. Department of Public Works, V.I. Department of Health, V.I. Territorial Emergency Management Agency, V.I. Waste Management Authority, V.I. Fire and Emergency Medical Services, and the V.I. Port Authority, for their contributions to a safe and successful festival.