

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Fireworks Light Up The Night At the Annual Christmas Boat Parade

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It's a family favorite on St. Croix--the Annual Crucian Christmas Boat Parade, a festive event that brings out thousands to the Christiansted boardwalk to enjoy local food and drink, music, and just to have a good time.

This year's event took place on Saturday, and while the boat parade itself did not start until early evening when it was dark enough to see the elaborately decorated water vessels sail into the dock, it began early in the afternoon, from about 1 p.m., with a concert featuring performances from various groups, including Ebenezer Steel Pan Orchestra, pounding out traditional Christmas songs with a decidedly Caribbean flavor.



Locals line the Christiansted boardwalk for the

Annual Christmas Boat Parade

[Youth With A Mission](#) (YWAM) organized the afternoon's musical activities, and the organization itself performed skits and dances. Other groups included the St. Croix Christmas Carolers, and the South Gate and Calvary Baptist Church choirs.

Historically, the crowds are sporadic throughout the afternoon while the groups are performing, with only a few people looking on, and this year was no different. Vendors were still setting up at 3 p.m., and it was not until about 4 p.m. that the crowds started to build.

Though not as big a turn out as last year, thousands still showed up to watch the boats, decorated with festive Christmas lights, as they sailed past the boardwalk, with music playing loudly while people on the boats danced. The most beautifully and heavily adorned boats usually get the loudest applause, and last night was no different.

And, to close, who can miss the fireworks. It is always the last spectacle in the organizers arsenal, dazzling and awing the multitudes as the fireworks shoot into the sky and explode into marvelous pieces of light. People who live in the Christiansted area -- and sometimes even further if the persons viewing live on hilltops, relax in the comfort of their



Fireworks at the Annual Christmas Boat

Parade. Photo credit: Christmas Boat Parade Facebook

Coverage of the event was carried by the WJKC radio stations -- including Isle 95, keeping up with the tradition of ensuring that those who could not attend in person got a

taste of what was going on over the airwaves.

By the time the night was over, people seemed as satisfied with the entertainment as they were with the food--and the food, as is always the case, was especially good. Vendors sold everything from patés to roti, and BBQ'd ribs to shish kabobs. The drinks were on point, too, especially the sorrel juice from a vendor closest to the boardwalk.

This year, according to one of the YWAM organizers, there were five more vendor entries compared to last year, a sign that more and more local food sellers are searching for ways to increase their bottom line as the St. Croix economy continues to falter.

Another important note is the unwavering resolve of the St. Croix people. It's no secret that the island has been facing deep economic duress for almost three years with the closing of HOVENSA, an occurrence that has caused many businesses to shutter and residents to move elsewhere to find jobs. Yet, many in attendance at last night's boat parade spoke well of the island and their pride was evident on their faces throughout the night.

"It was a great turnout with lots of boats and people," a local attending the event told *VI Consortium*. "Just what the Island needs during this difficult time."

He concluded: "St. Croix will move forward and succeed."

Photo Credit: *Doyle Young*