

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Merlisa George-Plante is Miss V.I. Large And In Charge 2015

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In the U.S. Virgin Islands, there's the Carnival Duchess and Princess show, the Carnival Queen show and, if you haven't heard, Miss Virgin Islands Large & In Charge.

That's right.

And this year, the winner is St. Croix's Merlisa George-Plante.

The stage at the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School came alive on Saturday night as three contestants -- George-Plante, Tyra Bartlette and Renesha Stevens -- had on display their best performances in various categories.

And what an event it was.

If George-Plante won (and she did), it's not because there was a lack of exceptional talent from the other ladies, but, rather, it's because George-Plante managed to consistently put on stellar performances throughout the night.

VI Consortium caught up with George-Plante the day after she took home the crown to find out how she felt about being crowned Miss USVI Large & In Charge 2015.

"I am absolutely excited, overwhelmed, and proud all at the same time!" George-Plante said. "Miss Large & In Charge is representative of just yet another sect of women who live in the Virgin Islands. As a people, we are all important to the territory [and] I represent mothers, daughters, business professionals, and entrepreneurs because I am all of those things."



















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George-Plante, it should be noted, is no stranger to pageantry. In 2002, she was crowned Miss Virgin Islands Universe and have been involved in various competitions in one form or another over the years.

"I love pageantry and all it encompasses, George-Plante offered. "I aged out of pageantry before I really felt I got started, so since my life fits closer to all of these requirements. I said I will give pageantry another try -- me center stage."

Miss V.I. Large & In Charge is in its second year, and according to those who attended this year's event, last year's crowd was somewhat bigger, but this year's community participation was also strong.

As part of the competition, contestants performed in four categories: Royal Ascot, Evening Cocktail, Talent and Swimwear. For talent, George-Plante recited a poem by Nigerian-American poet Osas Ighodaro. There were no first and second runner-ups.

When asked what she would embark on next, George-Plante said some well-needed rest was in order, and that she was still wrapping her head around her new responsibilities brought forth by winning the crown.

And, when it comes to encouraging women to love and accept themselves for who they are, the vibrant George-Plant offered this advice to women struggling with low self-esteem..

"What I would say to a woman with low self esteem is first, sit with her and encourage her in all of the other attributes she possesses," she said. "Secondly, I would remind her of the agape love I have for her, but that Jesus loved her first."