

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Soca Monarch Brings Festival Village To Caravelle Hotel Parking Lot With Eliminations Event

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Ernice Gilbert **December 23, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- The Soca Monarch competition in the Crucian Christmas Festival Village has grown into one of the biggest shows of the 11 days of activities. For one night only, the organizers are bringing the big show to the parking lot of the Caravelle Hotel in Christiansted this Saturday at 9:00 p.m., where a myriad of activities aside from the eliminations session will be taking place.

As for the eliminations event, also called preliminaries, it will feature some of the biggest local names, including Kylo, Nikki Brooks, Blackest, BDJ, Shamall, Davina Mar, Bugzy and more. They are all vying for a slot in the finals, which will take place on January 3 at the Festival Village in Frederiksted.

The event is sponsored in part by Caravelle Hotel and Casino, according to Alvin Burke, Jr., chairman of Soca Party Monarch. Mr. Burke says residents should expect to be greatly entertained on Saturday, stating that a lot of time went into preparation. Aside from the music, vendors will be onsite providing some of the islands' favorite eats.

"It's one of the biggest shows before the big show," Mr. Burke said, noting that the event takes place on Christmas Eve. For the first time, the show is open to outside participants from around the Caribbean region, according to Mr. Burke, who made known that a recording artist from Tortola will be among those vying for the Soca Monarch crown. "The competition has gotten to the point where it's gotten the attention of the Caribbean region," he said.

The first prize purse went up from \$5,000 to \$7,000 this year for the "jumpy" segment, while the winner of the "groovy" segment of the Soca Monarch takes home \$5,000. Mr. Burke said artists have been stepping up their performances; a realization that prompted the Soca Monarch organizers to increase the prize.

The Soca Monarch organization will also be launching a raffle on Saturday, where participants stand to win impressive prizes. The first prize package includes a three-night stay at the Caravelle Hotel and Casino and dining at local restaurants Balter, Bombay Club and JV Diner. The second prize package comes with a three-night stay at Palms at Pelican Cove, while a free car rental from Budget Rental Car is the third prize. Fourth and fifth place winners get certificates to local restaurants and a coupon for \$40 worth of gas. Tickets are \$5 for one, and \$25 for a book that includes 6 tickets.

The Soca Monarch has grown into the biggest show at the Festival Village, attracting over 4,000 people last year, according to Mr. Burke. He described tomorrow's event as a festival in the parking lot of Caravelle Hotel, which he says promises to enhance the festive season in a big way.