

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Hurricanes Irma And Maria Could Not Destroy Carnival

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ST. THOMAS -- There's a song by Spectrum Band aptly titled, "Cyan Mash Up Carnival", that epitomized the 2018 Virgin Islands Carnival experience. After enduring two Category 5 hurricanes seven months ago, the idea of abandoning carnival in 2018 must have been tempting to some. After all, in that moment in September 2017, it was anyone's guess how soon the U.S. Virgin Islands would recover to a point of normalcy.

But fast forward to April 2018, after Hurricanes Irma and Maria walloped the entire territory and left most without power, many without housing while precipitating an exodus to the mainland, the spirit of the Virgin Islands, during its most significant cultural affair, was alive and well and, in some instances, stronger than ever. From the various shows and events that started in early April, to the main showcases such as J'ouvert Morning

and the parades, Virgin Islanders reveled as if the storms never happened.

That enduring spirit of moving on regardless of the past was proof positive in the U.S.V.I. on Saturday during the Adults Parade, which featured a dazzling array of colors from a variety of troupes, as they danced down the long stretch that leads all the way to Post Office Square. Among the troupes were the University of the Virgin Islands, Infernos, Hugga Bunch (which featured [Fete Like Scot](#)), What A Party and the Gypsy Troupe, after whom this year's carnival was themed. The aforementioned were just a few of the many entrants during this year's carnival, which topped out at 38 (this includes royalty entrants as well).

While troupe participation was slightly down from last year, the parade was still of a respectable length, with activities ending around 5:30 p.m. -- which gave eventgoers ample time to attend Village activities for the final night (Triple Kay from Dominica and Fay-Ann Lyons, the wife of top Soca artist Bungi Garlin, both of whom are from Trinidad, headlined the show).

The community turned out in strong numbers, with onlookers lining the parade route from almost the beginning to the very end at Post Office Square, where judges, dignitaries and media are traditionally stationed.

This year's carnival was bound to be reviewed with Hurricanes Irma and Maria in mind. How would a U.S. territory that was ravaged by two Category 5 storms seven months ago approach the feature event of its culture, which is glamorous by nature, while contending with the hardships left in wake of the hurricanes? Would residents be up to it? Would the cash-strapped government allocate the hundreds of thousands of dollars, as well as a wealth of resources, necessary to assure that the activities were conducted in an orderly fashion?

Would the spirit of the Virgin Islands Carnival still be alive?

The answer to these questions is yes. Not only did the territory celebrate carnival as if the 2017 storms never came, Virgin Islanders showed themselves to be able to move past the most arduous of situations to embrace a better future.

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