

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Taste Of St. Croix Is Back, This Time With New Location And Multiple Events

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ST. CROIX -- With Hurricanes Irma and Maria leaving widespread damage in their wake in 2017, the 2018 Taste of St. Croix event, one of the most significant food festivals in the territory, did not take place during its regular April schedule, leaving foodies disappointed.

The organizers had good reasons for the postponement, too. The Divi Carina Bay Hotel and Casino sustained heavy damage from Maria. In fact, while the casino reopened recently, many of the hotel's rooms remain unusable.

But the show must go on, and in light of Divi's unavailability, the event's creator, Collin Hodge, in a sponsorship letter addressed to potential supporters, announced the new

location of the event to be the town of Christiansted, where Taste of St. Croix -- along with partner Caravelle Hotel & Casino -- "will transform Christiansted into a culinary showcase," reads the letter.

"After two Category 5 storms just one year ago, we at Taste Inc. feel that it is more important than ever before to showcase our restaurants and other industry partners, not only to our community, but to the world abroad, letting them know that our culinary industry is ready and open for business," reads the letter.

This year's event is set for November 15 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., with after-parties continuing into the night throughout the town, according to the letter.

According to the letter, Taste of St. Croix contributes and funds many local programs, including restaurant and industry-related services and training. These projects are designed to support, educate, and promote the hospitality industry year-round, the letter says.

St. Croix Culinary Juniors - Committed to supporting future generations, the St. Croix Culinary Juniors program exposes St Croix youth to the opportunities and possibilities within the culinary industry. Taste put together a team of 7th and 8th graders, who receive weekly training with local and nationally known executive chefs. They then present their new skills and honed talents working with professional chef talent at Taste and other

Reef Responsible - Working closely with the Nature Conservancy and its partners, A Taste of St. Croix coordinates workshops to promote sustainable fishing within the Virgin Islands hospitality industry in a manner that can also be marketed to consumers

Farm-to-Table – Through a partnership with the VI Department of Agriculture, A Taste of St. Croix supports and builds the network between restaurants and St. Croix's local farms. From farmers markets to showcase featured locally grown products to vouchers for participating restaurants to use with local farms, Taste supports the hospitality industry from farm to table.

Social Media Marketing Class - A partnership between St. Croix Lime and A Taste of St. Croix, our Social Media Marketing Class provided information on how to utilize social media as a free and powerful marketing tool. Attendees, ranging from restaurants to representatives from the VI Department of Tourism, learned the details behind using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and mobile apps for maximum exposure.

50/50 Taste Coupon Program - To support restaurants and strengthen relationships between farmers and our chefs, the Taste provides vouchers to over 50 Taste restaurants every year. This program promotes awareness and serves as an important motivator for chefs to use locally grown (and owned) ingredients— an economic and healthy benefit for both parties and the public.

ServSafe Certification Course - A Taste of St. Croix coordinates ServSafe, the National Restaurant Association's restaurant food safety program. This was the first time this class was made available on St. Croix, but standard practice for more kitchen staff throughout the United States.

Youth Hospitality Training Program – Working with the St. Croix Educational Complex, Taste recognizes the importance of youth training and assist students in the finding summer internships, including sending St. Croix students to work at Facebook's corporate headquarters.

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