

The Virgin Islands Consortium

At New Location, Taste Of St. Croix Maintains Success, Turnout

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ST. CROIX -- After being held at the Divi Carina Bay Hotel for most of its years, Taste of St. Croix -- the culinary extravaganza that has become the number one event of its kind in the U.S. Virgin Islands -- brought the experience to downtown Christiansted, with participants lining the streets from the Bes Craft & Cocktail Lounge, all the way to the Caravelle Hotel.

What can best be described as a food party, saw an overwhelming number of Virgin Islanders and visitors alike making use of their more than \$70 access ticket to taste a variety of eats from participating chefs, restaurants, farms and more. From chowders to locally brewed beer, breadfruit jabarito and guavaberry roast pork, to tamales -- Taste of

St. Croix had a variety of hors d'oeuvre to enjoy. Of course, there were wines, too; Taste would not be the same without spirits.

Collin Hodge, who organizes Taste, told The Consortium last night that he was pleased with the turnout in downtown Christiansted, and thanked those who worked to make it happen.



Image Credit: Cruselda Roberts for VI Consortium

"In terms of execution, in terms of response, it was another soldout event. It took a little longer than in the past, but we did sellout today. We even had to stop taking money at the door because we were at capacity and I did not want to make it uncomfortable," Mr. Hodge said. He said food was still available at the various booths until 9:00 p.m., and the entertainment, which included bands at the top of Company Street to the Caravelle Hotel, was seemingly enjoyed by patrons, he said.

"Overall, I received good reviews in terms of response," Mr. Hodge said.

Mr. Hodge said some merchants were inconvenienced, and he apologized to them during the interview. "That was an unintentional side effect, so I do apologize. I don't know how or if we can remedy that situation, or if it will be held in town again. I would not do it [in town] again if a majority of my neighbors are not going to benefit."

Mr. Hodge thanked restaurants and partners for their support, and God for holding up the weather.

"The biggest thing is there were many who said, 'how in the world are you going to do this?' However, when they came here they were amazed to see the layout and how we were able to control the environment, because this is an open environment," Mr. Hodge said.

There were after-parties throughout the town following the 9:00 p.m. end of the main show, with events continuing at Dashi at the Caravelle Court Yard, Cloud 9 and more.

Taste of St. Croix has traditionally been held in April of each year at the Divi Carina Bay Hotel, but following the devastating 2017 hurricanes Irma and Maria, the hotel sustained widespread damaging. Mr. Hodge, however, was determined not to let the year end without hosting the mainstay culinary extravaganza.