

The Virgin Islands Consortium

2019 Food & Wine Experience Events Lineup Announced; This Year's Theme Titled 'Feel St. Croix'

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The St. Croix Foundation announced Friday the events lineup for its annual benefit, the 2019 St. Croix Food and Wine Experience (F.W.E.). The benefit sees a series of culinary food and wine events being held around St. Croix from Thursday April 4 through Sunday April 7. The events are also a celebration of the people, land, culture and cuisine of St. Croix.

Now in its 12th year, F.W.E. has a long history of promoting not just St. Croix, but holistic community development through the work of the foundation. An outgrowth of the culinary extravaganza "A Taste of St. Croix", F.W.E. is now the annual fundraiser for the St. Croix Foundation and has enabled the 28-year-old organization to advance its mission of

encouraging greater philanthropic activity, marshaling resources, and acting as a catalyst to benefit the people of the Virgin Islands, according to the release.

While A Taste of St. Croix and F.W.E. have existed as independent entities since 2016, the impact of both events has brought international recognition to St. Croix and has elevated St. Croix's brand as a bona-fide culinary destination, the release said.

Over the past three years, the foundation has been committed to ensuring that every event, every project and initiative attached to its name is perfectly aligned with the organization's mission and programmatic priorities of community revitalization and holistic community development, according to the release.

This year, foundation said it's proud to be taking all necessary steps to truly embody the 2019 theme for the experience: Feel St. Croix, which commits to emphasizing the island's special characteristics. The foundation is also expanding partnerships with community stalwarts Bohlke International Airways, balter restaurant and Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits, as well as forming new friendships with community revitalizers like the Caravelle Hotel and Casino, the release said.

As the foundation seeks to really ground the F.W.E. this year, two of the experience's events will serve culinary delights that are 100 percent locally sourced. And with additional surprises in store, the St. Croix Foundation said it is certain that the annual celebration will be like never before.

As with every year, 2019's weekend event series will consist of an impressive roster of the finest vendors, local chefs and nationally and regionally acclaimed guest chefs. Chefs will participate in events that range from relaxed to elegant options for foodies and wine connoisseurs, alongside guest wine makers and spirit companies that will pair their expertise at each event.

The 2019 schedule of events is as follows:

Thursday, April 4

bond @ balter – A special invitation only reception, an evening of celebrity chefs, exclusive spirits, and delectable appetizers await sponsors, partners, chefs, vintners, and media at balter restaurant and creates the perfect ambiance for active, passionate philanthropists to meet and mingle. 4:30 PM Thursday.

Friday, April 5

Cork & Fork – The cosmopolitan Cork & Fork Dinner returns for 2019! Always with a renowned chef. Always in a stunning private home. Always the height of elegance and intimacy. Call for location. 6 PM Friday

Sunset BBQ – Our much-loved Sunset BBQ is back as well for 2019! Bring the family out to Frederiksted Pier for the perfect Crucian sunset and finger-licking BBQ treats from some of St. Croix's finest restaurants and eateries. With live music, a raffle, and plenty of room to roam, there's something for everyone. 6 PM Friday

Saturday, April 6

Wine in the Warehouse – Let your cup overflow with the spirit of philanthropy and raise a glass (or several!) to community. Enjoy Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits' fine wines,

appetizers, and live music in Bohlke International Airways' exclusive jet hanger. Grab your passports and prepare your taste buds for a flavor journey that you won't want to miss, because no matter how far you may fly, on St. Croix, you're always home. Wine sales available. 6 PM Saturday

Sunday, April 7

Gourmet Vintner Dinner – Join us and one of St. Croix's favorite culinary artists, award winning Chef Digby Stridiron. This lively and community- centric dining experience pairs fabulous wines with a 5-course meal and includes a live auction. This event is not to be missed! 6 PM Sunday

“Despite the ever-present consequences of the aftermath of the two Category 5 Hurricanes that ravaged the Virgin Islands over a year ago, the Foundation, with the generous support of corporate partners and individuals, is committed to demonstrating real civic leadership, said Foundation President Deanna James. “We are also proud to report that every sponsorship dollar raised and the revenues received from this event are leveraged many times over and reinvested into the community to support the Foundation's operations as well as its territory-wide mission of social, economic, and educational transformation.”

The foundation sees itself as a hardworking organization and the Food and Wine Experience as the one time each year it reaches out and asks for the community's support.

Since its founding in 1990 following the devastation of Hurricane Hugo, the St. Croix Foundation has been a visionary of social change and community development, working with community partners to challenge the status quo in order to address key priority areas including community and economic development, education reform, public safety, and nonprofit development, according to the release.

In line with the vision of its founders, (late community stalwarts Philip Gerard and Michael Neuburger), the foundation continues to operate as a place-based hybrid-foundation, serving as a grantmaker as well as a project manager and direct service provider. One of the most important components of the foundation's work is providing fiduciary and fiscal sponsorship services to over 220 grassroots efforts, organizations, and charitable initiatives throughout the territory, according to the release. Today, the foundation has expanded its programmatic portfolio to include providing support to a growing number of St. Croix's nonprofits through its Nonprofit Consortium, a project which provides capacity building, technical support and advocacy on the local and national stage. In total, over the past 28 years, the foundation has been a conduit of \$41 million private and public sector dollars invested into the U.S. Virgin Islands.

For information about tickets, events, and sponsorship go [here](#).

Feature image courtesy Food & Wine Experience website. Photographer [Malek Bascombe](#).