

logo not found or type unknown

USVI Positioning Itself as Leading Caribbean Destination For Marine Tourism, Dept. of Tourism Says

Experience the USVI / **Published On May 22, 2021 07:31 AM /**

Staff Consortium **May 22, 2021**

Image not found or type unknown



The U.S. Virgin Islands is positioning the territory as the first choice for a world-class Caribbean marine experience, says the Dept. of Tourism. Above, a yacht in St. John. By. V.I. DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

The V.I. Department of Tourism said Friday it has big plans to strengthen its position as a leading Caribbean destination for marine tourism.

Speaking after last weekend's St. Thomas Yacht Club Invitational Regatta, D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte said the department's focus on welcoming mariners throughout the Covid-19 pandemic has returned strong dividends for the destination.

"Despite numerous pandemic-related challenges, we have leveraged the talent and creativity of our team to sharpen our focus on our incredible marine and charter yacht industry," said Mr.

Boschulte, who believes the U.S. Virgin Islands will “take full advantage of our natural resources and assets to deliver world-class experiences for visitors arriving on our shores.”

He said the territory had already begun to strengthen its marine tourism offerings when the pandemic provided additional opportunities to tap into the charter yacht industry. In 2019, the direct contribution to the U.S. Virgin Islands economy made by charter and sport-fishing vessels was estimated at approximately \$45 million.

“We forecast the 2020-2021 numbers to show significant growth due to the large number of visiting vessels,” he disclosed.

An important development this past winter season was the introduction of The Moorings, a premier global yacht charter company, to the charter operations base on St. Thomas.

D.O.T. said the territory has an across-the-board commitment to the industry with several agencies coordinating to offer a concierge experience for the marine industry, whether for leisure, business or competitions.

The department further stated it will continue to support events such as fishing tournaments, the Virgin Islands Charter Yacht Show and the annual St. Thomas International Regatta, and has a robust media hospitality program, which attracts national media to experience and cover the destination’s marine offerings and events. ?

“Because of the diligent adherence to public health protocols, including our Travel Screening Portal, we have been successful in delivering marine events in the Territory over the past year,” said Mr. Boschulte, who saluted Governor Albert Bryan and Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach for their vision to position the territory's marine sector upfront and center, according to the release. The commissioner also congratulated local partners such as the Virgin Islands Professional Charter Association and the St. Thomas Yacht Club for their efforts to ensure that residents and visitors have a safe and healthy marine experience.

The Department of Tourism has developed and maintains a designated webpage that showcases the territory’s marine value proposition, the release stated. Upcoming events include the International Optimist Regatta (June 14 to 20, 2021?), the Virgin Islands Charter Yacht Show (November 7 to 10, 2021), and the inaugural Caribbean Charter Yacht Show at Yacht Haven Grande – St. Thomas (December 9-12, 2021).

Mr. Boschulte also noted that D.O.T. is collaborating with the Office of the Governor to create a St. Croix-specific marine program, with its own dedicated marketing platform.