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Starlight Lounge and Nightclub, Popular Entertainment Spot on St. Croix, Closes its Doors Permanently on April 3

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The Starlight Lounge and Nightclub will permanently shut its doors on April 3, 2022. By. REEMY-REEMZ PHOTOGRAPHY/VICONSORTIUM

Popular St. Croix entertainment spot Starlight Lounge & Nightclub, known for its topnotch security and excellent service, as well as being one of the best designed clubs in the territory, will permanently shut its doors on April 3.

The closure, confirmed to the Consortium Wednesday by Starlight owner Kevin Elliot, brings into focus the impact that Covid-induced restrictions are having on businesses in the U.S. Virgin Islands, an impact being borne acutely by entertainment establishments whose businesses are the

first to feel the pinch of government orders.

"After two years of pandemic it's just been very draining," Mr. Elliot told the Consortium Wednesday. "It's like a drought and with the Task Force, they tell you you could do this, you open up and you spend money, you shut back down again because Covid rises again. It's just difficult."



He added, "I did two years of good entertainment and Covid took two years and wiped it out right from under me."

Starlight, which opened late 2017 had become a facility not only for club events but also annual Christmas parties for both private and public sector businesses, and private gatherings including birthday parties and baby showers. Located at Five Corners in La Grande Princesse, Starlight quickly became ubiquitous as the go-to spot for great entertainment in a safe environment.

The Bryan administration has been uneven relative to how it has managed restrictions placed on entertainment facilities, with business owners complaining that some establishments were allowed to host events that flouted restrictions while others were punished. Multiple establishments were closed on various occasions by an overzealous Covid-19 Task Force which at times has abused its government-endowed powers to enforce restrictions. The Starlight Lounge was a victim of this abuse of power when the establishment — which was following the rules — was arbitrarily shutdown on Dec. 1 last year, according to video surveillance of the occurrence viewed by the Consortium. After some behind-the-scenes protestations, Starlight reopened, and a 4-year anniversary event featuring Cool Sessions Brass it had spent thousands of dollars on was allowed to move forward.

Even so, the pandemic has taken its toll, Mr. Elliot told the Consortium, and with restrictions still in place that forbids pre-Covid gathering levels, it's an uphill battle to maintain a businesses whose costs measure in the thousands of dollars on a monthly basis. From rent, to utilities, insurance and other obligations, costs could easily climb to \$8,000-\$10,000 a month to maintain the high-quality entertainment spot. And that's before factoring in payroll, as the club employs several individuals working in areas of security and hospitality.



"The rules are not fair. I have a big club and my capacity limit is the same as the small clubs, and I can't do it any longer. I had to make an executive decision," Mr. Elliot said. Speaking relative to an executive order [announced](#) by Governor Albert Bryan in October that eased some restrictions on entertainment businesses, Mr. Elliot said, "I put \$18,000 into my club right when they said we were going to open back up, including some new AC units, and they [shut down the place again](#)."

He added, "From the outside people think it's green, but it's drying up, it's really drying up. I had to come to a decision and I thought long and hard about it, but I had to make an executive decision and say, you know what, hold on to the little change you have left and don't empty it out and then you have nothing.



"I tried to hold on for the people because the people really love Starlight," Mr. Elliot stated, revealing that the few people he told about the closure were almost brought to tears.

A jovial individual, Mr. Elliot has a perennial cheerfulness and friendly demeanor. He also follows the rules. However, his experience as the owner of an entertainment facility during the pandemic has challenged his perception on the rewards of always doing the right thing.

"I'm one of the club owners following the rules. Even when people told me to break the rules I decided not to break the rules, and what do I get out of it? I have to close down, and others who were breaking the rules and getting to do their events and maybe got shutdown for a couple of days and open back up, they still have their business. I guess it doesn't pay to be the good guy."

The Starlight Lounge will host its closing event on April 3. Details will be forthcoming on the club's [Facebook page](#).