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UberSoca Cruise Ignites a Sensational Start to the 71st St. Thomas Carnival Season

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UberSoca cruise participants and locals packed the Carnival Village in downtown Charlotte Amalie on Thursday, April 13 2023 for a historic festival. By. LIONEL WHYTE PHOTOGRAPHY VIA UBERSOCA CRUISE ON INSTAGRAM

The UberSoca Cruise event that was first announced in May 2022 became a reality on Thursday in St. Thomas, and what a historic showing of Caribbean unity and Virgin Islands pride it was.

People from around the Caribbean, the U.S. and elsewhere, including a large number of Virgin Islanders, took to the streets of Charlotte Amalie beginning at WICO where the cruise ship docked, and made their way to the Carnival Village for what will go down as a historic festival sure to be remembered for years.

From Skinny Fabulous to Bunji Garlin, other artists including local talent, the Festival Village came alive Thursday night, essentially kicking off the 71st St. Thomas Carnival season which will feature one of the best lineups ever: among them Soca legend Machel Montano, Dancehall superstar Shenseea, Bunji Garlin, Fay-Ann Lyons and many more.

Thursday's successful UberSoca Cruise experience was the first of several planned through a partnership with USC and the V.I. Dept. of Tourism, Division of Festivals, according to D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte. "UberSoca Cruise's brand is synonymous with a unique experience and likewise, the U.S. Virgin Islands offers visitors three reasons to fete - St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas - to provide an unforgettable backdrop for Carnival goers who are seeking an unforgettable cultural experience," said Mr. Boschulte when announcing the event last year.

Those who couldn't attend enjoyed the feting vicariously online through the Division of Festivals' [Facebook page](#), which at time of publication had nearly 60,000 views and almost 7,000 comments.

Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach, apparently watching from the Gov't House area, was impressed with the event. "Observing our Carnival Village from my unique vantage point as we host the UberSoca Cruise 2023. I think I might make my way down..." he [wrote on Facebook](#).

Governor Albert Bryan gave half of Thursday off to non-essential government employees and public school students to facilitate the event, which would have otherwise created a chaotic situation for commute. "We're hoping that this opportunity to showcase our Virgin Islands will really give us a world stage when it comes to competition in terms of feting," Mr. Bryan said during Tuesday's Gov't House press briefing, noting that a stop in St. Croix has already been programmed for next year.