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First V.I. Pate Festival Celebrates Culinary Excellence With 61 Vendors, Cultural Entertainment

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Pictures of the USVI's First Pate Festival. By. DEAR PRODUCTIONS/BRIA JAMES/VI CONSORTIUM

The first-ever Virgin Islands Pate Festival was a resounding success this past Sunday, seeing strong turnout, dozens of culinary offerings and a proper mix of cultural entertainment.

The event, held at the Agricultural Fair Grounds on St. Croix, attracted a plethora of eager attendees keen to savor the island's signature pates. With a wide range of activities and 61 vendors to choose from, the festival proved to be a culinary and cultural delight for all, providing the younger generation with bouncy castles, laser tag, and virtual game rooms.

"We understand that pate is a big staple in the culinary community here in the Virgin Islands. So, we figured that if we did a festival, it would entice the community," explained the event's organizers, Shenel and Sean Tutein. The idea, which originated five years ago, was to create a family-friendly, fun, and culturally enriching event. The response from the public was tremendous. "We thank the community for their unwavering support as they came out in droves today," added the Tuteins.

Festival-goers were spoiled for choice with an array of scrumptious pates. Joycelyn Gore, from Food and Drink Express, was a standout vendor with her homemade pate dough and a mouth-watering selection of saltfish, beef, and chicken pates. "I am proud to say that all the pate's dough is homemade," said Gore.

Attendee Carmen Villafana praised the quality of the food and the vibrant atmosphere. "The food is great, drinks are delicious, and the atmosphere is excellent," she said. Villafana also gave shoutouts to booths 46, 24, and Turkey Leg on the Go, and particularly enjoyed a refreshing beverage from a lemonade stand.

Marjorie Macedon De Lugo from Coral Sea Café and Restaurant credited her mother for teaching her the art of pate making. De Lugo served traditional favorites like conch, saltfish, shrimp, and beef. "I am glad this event was held because it showcases a staple food, pate, that we have in the Virgin Islands," said De Lugo.

Bernicia Moolenaar-Rawlins from Bayside Kitchen reported a very successful event as her stall sold out within two hours. "Honestly, the oxtail was the first to be sold out," she remarked. Jacidia Dubois, from A. Hiroko Eats, offered a variety of pates, including a hit short rib pate.

Rita Chiverton, who won first place for best entrée at Taste of St. Croix 2023, ran a busy stall serving lobster, mahi, conch, beef, chicken, and saltfish pates. "I was sold out, thank you Jesus. I enjoyed seeing the community come together and having a great time," she expressed.

Despite its successful outcome, there were concerns about the insufficient supply of pates at the fair, leading some attendees to depart without having tasted their desired pates or without having their fill. In anticipation of the upcoming 2024 event, the organizers plan to rectify these issues in response to the feedback received.

The festival's awards recognized the best in the business. The People's Choice Award went to Turkey Leg on the Go, while the Best Vegetarian Pate was a tie between A+E Catering and Freedom City Service Station. Island Vybez secured first place for the Best Seafood Pate, and Angela's Corner won for the Best Meat Pate.