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Division of Festivals Reverts Crucian Christmas Festival Opening to Dec. 26th Amidst Community Pushback

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2023 Festival Village on St. Croix. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM/DIVISION OF FESTIVALS/KGP

ST. CROIX – Following fervent pushback from the St. Croix community, the Division of Festivals has announced that the opening date for the Crucian Christmas Festival will revert back to December 26th, a traditional date cherished by locals.

Shamari Haynes, Division of Festivals assistant director for the St. Croix District, emphasized the importance of community feedback in the decision-making process, stating, “Like every other

carnival celebration, St. Croix Crucian Christmas Festival planning is a collaborative effort between the Division of Festivals and local committee members. No single person determines the specifics of the celebration including timeline, artists, and schedule. We hear the Crucian community and have shifted specific events to best align with the cultural significance of the traditional Crucian Christmas Festival dates."

Previously, the festivities were slated to commence on January 1, 2024. This proposed change took many Crucians by surprise, given the long-standing tradition of kicking off the Festival Village on December 26th, the day after Christmas. Officials from the Division of Festivals had justified the shift as a strategy to enhance the marketability of the territory's festivals, even as other locations like St. Thomas and St. John were seeing reduced festival days.

However, this rationale found little resonance with the Crucians. The opposition to the January 1st start date surged on social media platforms. With the persistent criticism showing no signs of abating, the decision to revert to the original date is expected to appease concerned locals.

The Division of Festivals also tantalized festival-goers with a sneak peek into the event's headliners. Notable artists like Patrice Roberts, Ricardo Dru, Mr. Killa, Destra, Blind Earz, and Karnage have been confirmed, with more high-profile announcements anticipated.

Crucian Christmas Festival Updated Schedule:

- December 26th: Village Soft Opening featuring Coney Island Rides & Vendor Booths, along with the Duchess, Prince, Princess, Jr Miss Pageant.
- December 27th: Calypso Monarch.
- December 28th: Miss St. Croix Festival Queen Pageant.
- December 29th: Village Grand Opening - International Cultural Night.
- December 30th: Soca Monarch.
- December 31st: NYE Celebration.
- January 1st: LATIN NIGHT.
- January 2nd: Sweet Melanin (Ladies Night).
- January 3rd: Food, Arts, & Crafts Fair at Ag Fair Grounds & UberSoca Night.
- January 4th: J'ouvert & Lovers and Friends.
- January 5th: Children's Parade & Band-O-Rama Night.
- January 6th: Adults Parade & AfroSoca Night.

Mr. Haynes told the Consortium Thursday morning that as part of the Division's goal of making the Crucian Christmas Festival more marketable, some changes were made to the names of Village Nights, most notably the Reggae Night, traditionally known to be when reggae acts perform. "For increased marketability and inclusivity, the branding for the night formerly known as Reggae has been rebranded to 'Lovers and Friends.' Additionally, a 'Latin Night' has been introduced to the festival schedule," Mr. Haynes said in a statement.

Last updated on Thursday, Aug. 17, 2023 at 7:25 a.m.