

BUBBLES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

pandemic hit and she had to cancel her plans. Because she quit in anticipation of the move, she no longer had a job.

Meanwhile, a friend introduced John-Baptiste to bubble tea and she began making it herself in August. Since she wasn't working, John-Baptiste thought now would be a good time to create her own job and open a bubble tea business.

"There are not a lot of jobs around, so I made one myself," she said.

Bubble tea is a tea-based drink that includes boba "pearls," either chewy tapioca balls or popping balls filled with fruit juice. The drink is usually made with black or green tea.

"I realized there's no bubble tea here, so why don't I start a business and bring in something new made locally? It's quick, easy and inexpensive to make, like iced tea but with a twist. It's super good, and once you start liking it, it's really addictive. I think it's great for people born and raised here to do something new, and if I can, bring something new to my community."

John-Baptiste began looking for a location where she could sell her teas and saw a listing for 81C, a new pop-up event space created by local entrepreneur Zack Zook. Located on Strand Gade near Market Square, the two-story building was originally built in 1810 as a rum warehouse and residence and is now completely renovated and restored. Zook's aim is to create a platform for creative event rental, artist/entrepreneur networking and giving young entrepreneurs such as John-Baptiste a space to test new products or hold supplemental events to complement their online business.

A deal was struck, and the first Bubbles by Lani pop-up networking event will be hosted Sunday from 1 a.m. to 8 p.m.

"It's a good way to test the product and make sure it's something people want before I pay \$5,000 a month in rent for something people

don't really like," said John Baptist. "Meanwhile, people can have it, and if I never end up having a store, at least I can show something new to my people, brought to them by somebody who grew up here. If I can't go all the way with it, that's fine with me. It's more important for me to do it and say that I've done it than to hold my breath and not start until I make sure from start to end that this is going to work, because I cannot control the future. So, today, if I can stand up at a counter and sell some people bubble tea, then I'm going to, and if tomorrow, some crazy murder hornet comes into my house and eats up all my tea leaves, then I've still sold bubble tea and I can check it off my list."

At the event, John-Baptiste will introduce her bubble tea for \$6.50 for a 16-ounce drink. A limited menu will include her personal favorite, blueberry and peach with strawberry boba, as well as a brown sugar and milk tea with tapioca boba, a classic milk tea and a strawberry, passion fruit and mango mixture.

"I'm just excited to have people try it. If this is the only time that they get to try bubble tea, I'm the one that brought it to them and that's kind of cool," she said. "Plus, I can show other local girls that they should just do something, just go for it. You don't have to have a big place, just have an idea and roll with it. My whole life, I just do things. They don't always go all the way, but at least I can say I had the experience and if I don't try, then what do I have? You just take it one step at a time and figure it out. Just keep on making moves and you'll end up somewhere. Maybe it won't be where you expected, but it's going to be somewhere different than where you started, and I think that in itself is an accomplishment."

Visit www.bubblesbylani.com for retractable metal straws and Princess Bubbles and Prince Boba plush toys, or visit the Bubble by Lani Facebook page for more information.

Haldane Davies to serve on International Economic Development Council Board

Haldane Davies, vice president for Business Development and Innovation of the University of the Virgin Islands, has been elected to serve on the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Board of Directors.



Haldane Davies

The nomination took place during IEDC's 2020 Annual Conference, which ran from Oct. 13-16. Davies' term begins on Jan. 1.

"Dr. Davies is an invaluable part of IEDC's member community. From his years of service within IEDC's range of disaster recovery

initiatives to his role on our Higher Education Advisory Committee, his dedication to our profession and IEDC has been exceptional," said Kenny McDonald, CEEd, President and Chief Economic Officer of One Columbus and 2020 Chair of the IEDC Board of Directors.

"I am thankful for the opportunity granted to me to serve as a member of the IEDC Board of Directors. As a member of the USVI EDA Board of Directors and an administrator at UVI, I look forward to representing the territory well and using the experiences gained to help advance the economic resiliency of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the nation," said Davies, whose office currently oversees the development of the USVI Comprehensive

Economic Development Strategy and the Tourism Development Plan.

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is a non-profit membership organization serving economic developers with more than 5,000 members and is the largest organization of its kind.

Economic developers promote economic well-being and quality of life for their communities by creating, retaining and expanding jobs that facilitate growth, enhance wealth and provide a stable tax base. IEDC's members create high-quality jobs, develop vibrant communities and improve the quality of life in their regions. For more information, visit www.iedcONLINE.org.

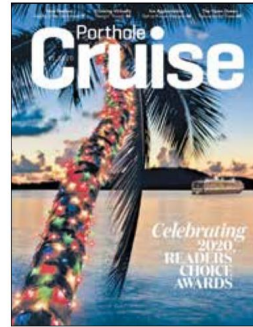
St. Thomas named Best Caribbean Cruise Destination

Daily News Staff

St. Thomas has been named the top cruise destination in the Caribbean for the second year in a row.

The award was determined by readers of Porthole Cruise Magazine, who voted for their favorite destination in the region in the publication's 22nd Annual Readers' Choice Awards. The results, published in the November/December 2020 issue of the magazine, also feature dozens of other reader favorites under the categories of best ships, best onboard experiences and best destinations.

"For St. Thomas to be chosen once again in the category of best Caribbean cruise destination, I think really illustrates that the U.S. Virgin Islands is doing something right," said Bill Panoff, publisher and editor-in-chief of Porthole Cruise Magazine. "Our readers are avid travelers with high standards



who really understand the nuance of cruise products, so they don't make these choices lightly."

Since reopening its doors to leisure visitors more than a month ago, the

territory has welcomed several thousand guests to stimulate much-needed economic activity through their spending on accommodations, activities and attractions. The island also experienced a significant uptick in U.S. visitors, reporting more than a 200% year-over-year increase of all travel insurance policies purchased through Squaresmouth.com between March 12 and Oct. 19 for all future travel.

Cruise industry analysis indicates steadfast interest in cruise experiences despite the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) "No Sail" order, which had prevented cruise ships from sailing in U.S. waters during most of the COVID-19 pandemic. Travelers are primarily concerned with being assured of each destination's adherence to stringent health and safety protocols.

Porthole Cruise Magazine is a leading cruise-travel magazine, available on newsstands and online.



**Self Pay,
Medicare, and
Most Insurances
Accepted**

LYN A. CAMPBELL, MD



*Specializing in Urgent Care
& Alternative Care*

URGENT CARE SERVICES

Walk-ins
Minor Injuries
Cold and Flu's
Aches and Pains

PRIMARY CARE SERVICES

Physicals
Lab Work
Disease Prevention
Pain Management

THREE ST. CROIX LOCATIONS:

- Estate Diamond Ruby - (340) 772-2883
- Mt. Welcome - (340) 643-7313
- Whim - (340) 772-1259

www.acutealternative.com

Acute Alternative Medical Group & Sleep Center has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval®

