

Up AND away

APRIL - JUNE 2021

BAHAMASAIR
INFLIGHT MAGAZINE

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The Sports ISSUE

GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND: Still Rockin'

BAHAMIAN
Olympic Greatness

SHAUNAE MILLER-UIBO
'A Bahamian Jewel'

A SIP, SNACK
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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND AVIATION OF THE BAHAMAS

Photo Courtesy of Bahamas Information Services (BIS)

“The Islands of The Bahamas are still rockin’.”

— Honorable Dionisio D’Aguilar, Minister of Tourism and Aviation



Honorable Dionisio D’Aguilar - Minister of Tourism and Aviation

Welcome to vacation paradise!

The Islands of The Bahamas are a chain of over 700 islands and cays located just 50 miles southeast of Florida. Comprised of sixteen unique island destinations, The Bahamas is home to a population of upwards of 380,000—a people whose legendary hospitality is the cornerstone of the world-class tourism destination that The Bahamas has built over the past six decades.

Months after Hurricane Dorian, the good news trending in travel is that the entire Bahamas is open for business—all sixteen island destinations. The reality is that the vast majority of our islands were not at all affected by Hurricane Dorian. The two hurricane-impacted islands, Abaco and Grand Bahama, are on their way to recovery. Most of Grand Bahama’s resorts and tourism-related businesses have reopened and are welcoming guests. Resorts and tourist establishments in parts of Abaco are also reopening for business. In spite of the destructive hurricane, the year 2019 closed out with a record-breaking seven million plus visitors, a first in the history of tourism in the Islands of The Bahamas!

The Islands of The Bahamas are still rockin’.

We are delighted that you have chosen to fly with Bahamasair, The Bahamas’ award-winning national airline, which connects our islands to the outside world and inter-connects the many islands of our archipelago. *Up and Away*, Bahamasair’s in-flight publication, is proud to introduce to you our sixteen unique island destinations: world-famous Nassau and Paradise Island, Grand Bahama, the Exuma Islands, Abaco, Eleuthera and Harbour Island, Bimini, the Berry Islands, Long Island, Andros, Cat Island, San Salvador, Acklins and Crooked Island, Ragged Island and Inagua.

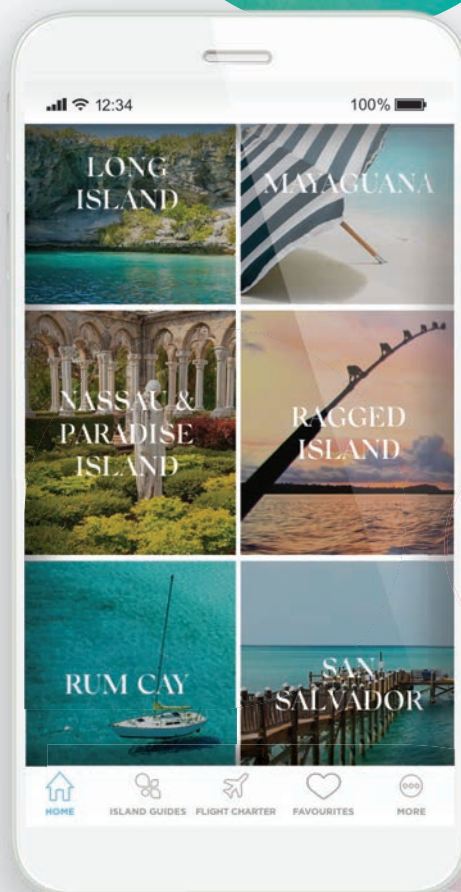
Our islands offer vacation experiences to suit every taste, from the excitement of every watersport imaginable—boating, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, paddle boarding, water skiing, sea kayaking and surfing—to duty-free shopping, high stakes gaming in world-class casinos, sightseeing tours of historical landmarks, eco-adventures and fine dining, to luxuriating on a palm-fringed, powder-soft white sand beach or watching a magnificent sunset. The options are endless!

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MESSAGE FROM BAHAMASAIR CHAIRMAN

Photo Courtesy of Bahamas Information Services (BIS)

“The indomitable spirit of the Bahamian people has not wavered,
and efforts to assist abound.”

—Chairman Tommy Turnquest

Dear Traveler,

I warmly welcome you aboard our country's award-winning national flag carrier and thank you for making Bahamasair your choice of travel. Our aim is to provide excellent service, improved on-time performance, an integrated network of reliability and convenience to make your travel experience enjoyable. It is a goal that we relentlessly pursue.

The Bahamas is still recovering from Hurricane Dorian, which unleashed a path of destruction on the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama in September 2019. Images of the damage and devastation have been seen all around the world, and it has been and will continue to be a tough road to recovery. However, the indomitable spirit of the Bahamian people has not wavered, and efforts to assist abound. I wish to commend the many courageous and hardworking members of our staff who were personally impacted by the hurricane, and those who have worked to help others regain a sense of normalcy.

The Bahamas is an archipelago made up of over 700 islands and cays, and a good way to support our country's recovery efforts is to visit one of our many island destinations. We are open for business and ready to serve you. We would love to take you there. Remember, we don't just fly here, we live here!

Our country has a population of around 380,000 people—small by any yardstick—yet we have excelled on the world stage in many areas. One such area has been track and field, particularly at the Olympics and World Championships. It is in this vein that I am pleased to announce that the World Champion in the women's 400-meter race, Shaunae Miller-Uibo, has agreed to become a Bahamasair ambassador.

Our national airline continues to grow and develop. We accept our challenges and we recognize our opportunities, as we also strive to achieve world-class status. We have a team of capable professionals including pilots, cabin attendants, ground agents and so many others who contribute significantly to make your travel experience enjoyable. We are continually reviewing our route structure and our schedule, and we hope to leverage our ATR fleet to expand our reach domestically and within the region. We hope that you choose to fly with us again and again, and indeed make us your airline of choice.

We are excited to have you aboard and again, on behalf of our entire team at Bahamasair, we thank you for your patronage, and to our visitors I extend a warm welcome to The Bahamas.

Hon. O. A. T. (Tommy) Turnquest, C.D.
Chairman, Board of Directors



Chairman Tommy Turnquest

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MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Photo by Torrell Glinton

“We may be a small country by the numbers, but we have had achievements from Bahamians that we are allowed to ‘crow about’.”

—Capt. L. Roscoe Dames II, JP, Publisher

Once again, our team has been at it, researching and compiling exciting features for your reading pleasure. And, if we do say so, we’ve “knocked it out of the park”—again!

After the devastation left behind in the wake of Hurricane Dorian in early September 2019 on the islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco, at *Up and Away*, we are delighted to share with you that The Bahama Islands are still “rockin’” and open for business.

Bahamians have a lot to be thankful for and to celebrate, nationwide and certainly regionally.

Nothing brings Bahamians together more than sports and we are already gearing up to celebrate, with this being an Olympic year.

The Summer Olympics will be held in late July in Tokyo, Japan, and, like the rest of the world, Bahamian elite athletes will be showcasing for the world why they are among the *crème de la crème*.

In this our “Sports Issue”, we have taken delight in celebrating our “Olympic Greatness”—from our first appearance at the Olympics in 1948 to our most recent appearance in 2016, and the stellar achievements by Bahamians in that 68-year period.

We may be a small country by the numbers in comparison to other nations with millions of residents, but we have had achievements from Bahamians that we are allowed to “crow about”.

As we highlight our athletes’ Olympic victories, achievements and appearances, we do so cognizant of the fact that our country has only around 380,000 citizens (the size of a small town in the United States or Canada).

In this edition of *Up and Away*, you can read about what defending women’s Olympic 400 metres champion and Bahamasair brand ambassador Shaunae Miller-Uibo says ahead of Tokyo.

We also delve into the world of sustainable fashion and how you can re-purpose clothing items into new pieces. You can read how our Bahamian designers Theodore Elyett and Phylcia Ellis are impacting the world with their designs.

Journey with us to Christ Church Cathedral, which sits in the heart of the city of Nassau and stands as a beacon of hope for many. Then take a trip with us off the beaten path on the island of Eleuthera to the Buccaneer Club, where you will be welcomed to the simplicity of island life.

Hop, skip and jump with us down to the Turks & Caicos Islands to Neptune Villas to experience luxury and privacy in a pristine oasis, then for a change of pace you can shake it up with us to sweet, sweet soca in Trinidad.

We continue the journey to enjoy the world’s best cigars from Cuba, and we invite you to indulge your sweet tooth with indigenous Bahamian treats loved through the decades as you read about how Beth Stewart continues to perpetuate Bahamian heritage by whipping up an assortment of her age-old childhood indulgences.

You will be inspired when you explore the world of husband and wife performing artists Dyson and Wendi Knight, and visual artist Matthew Wildgoose of Grand Bahama Island. These feature artists showcased are some of the incredible talent the Bahamas has to offer.

Welcome aboard our national flag carrier. Welcome to *Up and Away*. It is an honor for the team at Ivory Global Management Ltd., publishers, to be a part of Bahamasair’s ongoing history through its in-flight magazine. Do enjoy this issue and take a copy to share with family and friends.



Capt. L. Roscoe Dames II, JP

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CONTENTS

APRIL - JUNE 2021

ON THE COVER



Cover artwork
courtesy of the  **GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND**
ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS

- 14 Bahama Pearl @ LPIA
- 16 Indulge Your Sweet Tooth
- 19 Shaunae Miller-Uibo: A Bahamian Jewel
- 21 Bahamian Olympic Greatness
- 27 Sustainable Fashion: Looking Good While Doing Good
- 29 Little Water Cay: Sanctuary For The TCI Rocky Iguana
- 31 The City Church: Christ Church Cathedral
- 33 Young Lions: Our Art Culture Looks Bright
- 35 Grand Bahama Island: Still Rockin'
- 37 Bahamian Fashion Icons: The Genius Of Theodore Elyett And Phylicia Ellis
- 41 Sweet, Sweet Soca Music Of Trinidad And Tobago
- 45 Cuba's Cohiba Behike Cigars—'The World's Best'
- 47 Off The Beaten Path—Neptune Villas And Las Brisas Restaurant
- 52 Ordinary To Extraordinary
- 53 Margaritaville Beach Resort—Escape To Paradise
- 56 Performing Artists—Wendi & Dyson Knight
- 59 A Sip, Snack And Taste Of The West
- 63 Off The Beaten Path—The Buccaneer Club, Eleuthera, The Bahamas
- 66 Visual Artist—Matthew Wildgoose



Bahamas Goombay Punch is Bringing Regatta Pride to the Mainland!



It's regatta time, again! And, Bahamas Goombay Punch is celebrating sweet Bahamian culture with the introduction of the **Goombay Cup**, and a new line of limited edition cans that celebrate the sailing community.

Regattas are known to attract large crowds looking for a good time, delicious down-home Bahamian food, sweet rake & scrape music, and most importantly – a friendly (yet intense) competition. For the sailors who take to the open seas during each family island regatta, the race is not just about trophies, prizes or bragging rights – it is about celebrating decades of Bahamian culture and history.

With the sun hot and high in the sky, the multi-manned sloops hit the open water, carefully guiding their boats at a 45-degree angle along the wind. One

man serves as the eyes of his teammates, and the group skillfully maneuvers a sail, rudder, and tiller to steer their boats towards the finish line. Regattas are a long held Bahamian tradition, and in celebration of this deep rooted element of family-island culture, Bahamas Goombay Punch has rolled out six can designs featuring some of the sport's top vessels.

To coincide with the can launch, which will feature Exuma's 'Tida Wave', Ragged Island's 'New Courageous', San Salvador's 'San Sally', New Providence's 'Southern Cross', and the 'New Legend' and 'Running Tide' sailboats, both from Long Island, there will be the introduction of the **Goombay Cup**. The **Goombay Cup** is open to all 'A' class regatta boats, and the winning team, decided via the combined scores from the 2019 Best of the Best

Regatta, the 2020 National Family Island Regatta and 2020 Long Island Regatta, will receive a \$5,000 cash prize as well as a \$8,000 stipend that will be given to the Junior Sailor Club located on the winning vessel's island. The winner of the **Goombay Cup** will also have their sailboat featured on a congratulatory can, later in 2020.

Be on the lookout for the limited edition Bahamas Goombay Punch cans. The winner of the **Goombay Cup** will also be announced in June 2020 at the Long Island Regatta.



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MRS. CAPRICE SPENCER-DAMES, an administrative professional, has spent the majority of her career in the airline, retail and hospitality industries at various management levels. Her career and personal life have afforded her the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time living and traveling throughout our Family Islands, the Caribbean and the Americas. With a keen interest in culture, cuisine and people, she brings her experience to the various features and production of the publication.



MS. YOLANDA HANNA is a radio personality, publicist, writer and social media content creator living in the beautiful Bahamas. A ferocious advocate for the promotion of Bahamian music, art and culture, she is a "Grand Bahama baby" who is passionate about telling the stories of the Bahamian people.

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PROF. MYRURGIA HERNANDEZ, a doctorate candidate at Universidad de Baja California, Mexico, is an alumnus of University of Havana, Faculty of Foreign Languages (FLEX, according to Spanish acronyms) Class of 1998. She became an approved lecturer by the Board of the College of The Bahamas, now University of The Bahamas, in December 1999. In January of 2000, Hernandez joined the Faculty of the School of Communication and Creative Arts as a part-time Spanish lecturer.



MS. JODI MINNIS holds an Associate of Arts: Fine Arts from the College of The Bahamas (2015). She has exhibited in the United States, Australia and the Caribbean. Having worked in national galleries within The Bahamas, Minnis developed a curatorial practice. Her practice produced exhibitions within those spaces—most notably the “From Columbus to Junkanoo” exhibition co-curated with Averia Wright which opened in Santiago, Cuba, in 2015 and was exhibited again in 2016 at the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas. Currently, Minnis is a resident artist at The Current Gallery and Art Center at Baha Mar.



MRS. FELICITY DARVILLE is a media professional in The Bahamas of 25 years. During The Bahamas Press Club’s annual awards in 2018, Darville received special recognition from the Pan American Health Organization’s (PAHO) Bahamas office for her health feature on child diabetes. In addition to news reporting, Darville has experience in radio hosting for talk and music shows, videography, photojournalism, video editing, radio and television production, marketing



MS. KHASHAN POITIER is enticed by the art of storytelling. She wanted to be a screenwriter when she grew up, but after a high school internship with a local newspaper, she became a journalist instead. Some 20 years later, Poitier has written for TV, online and print in Texas and the Caribbean. Her experience in media relations has afforded her a diverse repertoire, which can be viewed at poitiergroup.com/portfolio. When she’s not storytelling, she’s reading or watching them, including movies, with her family.



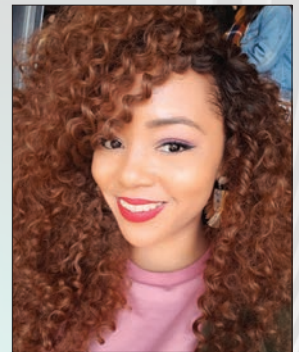
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MRS. JEAN BARRETT-SOMMERVILLE is a former model and actress who is currently heard around the world as a recognized voice talent on projects for Coca Cola, Ford, CNN and The Home Depot, among many others. She’s been creating upcycled fashions for more than 30 years. Her work has been seen in *Altered Couture Magazine*, in art galleries and on runways. You can catch Barrett-Sommerville on

the red carpet, wearing one of her upcycled creations, with her husband, trumpeter Joey Sommerville. To see more of her creative style, follow her on Instagram @drossintogold.

MS. NIKIA WELLS is an avid traveler with a passion for seeing the world, learning about new cultures, trying unique dishes and raising awareness about the freedoms of solo travel. In 2014, this Grand Bahama native created the PinkSands242 website, which is devoted to spreading her passion for travel, food and new experiences from a Bahamian perspective, while demystifying various elements of world travel. Her writings have been featured on www.bahamas.com and several other local publications.



MS. YASMIN JOHNSON is originally from the island of Eleuthera, and is currently completing her Master of Social Work with a specialization in human services management and leadership at the University of Toronto. Prior to pursuing her Master of Social Work, she held a marketing position with the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism’s Canadian office, as well as various managerial positions in the hospitality sector. Upon completion of her degree, she plans to return home to The Bahamas and work within both the tourism and social services sectors.

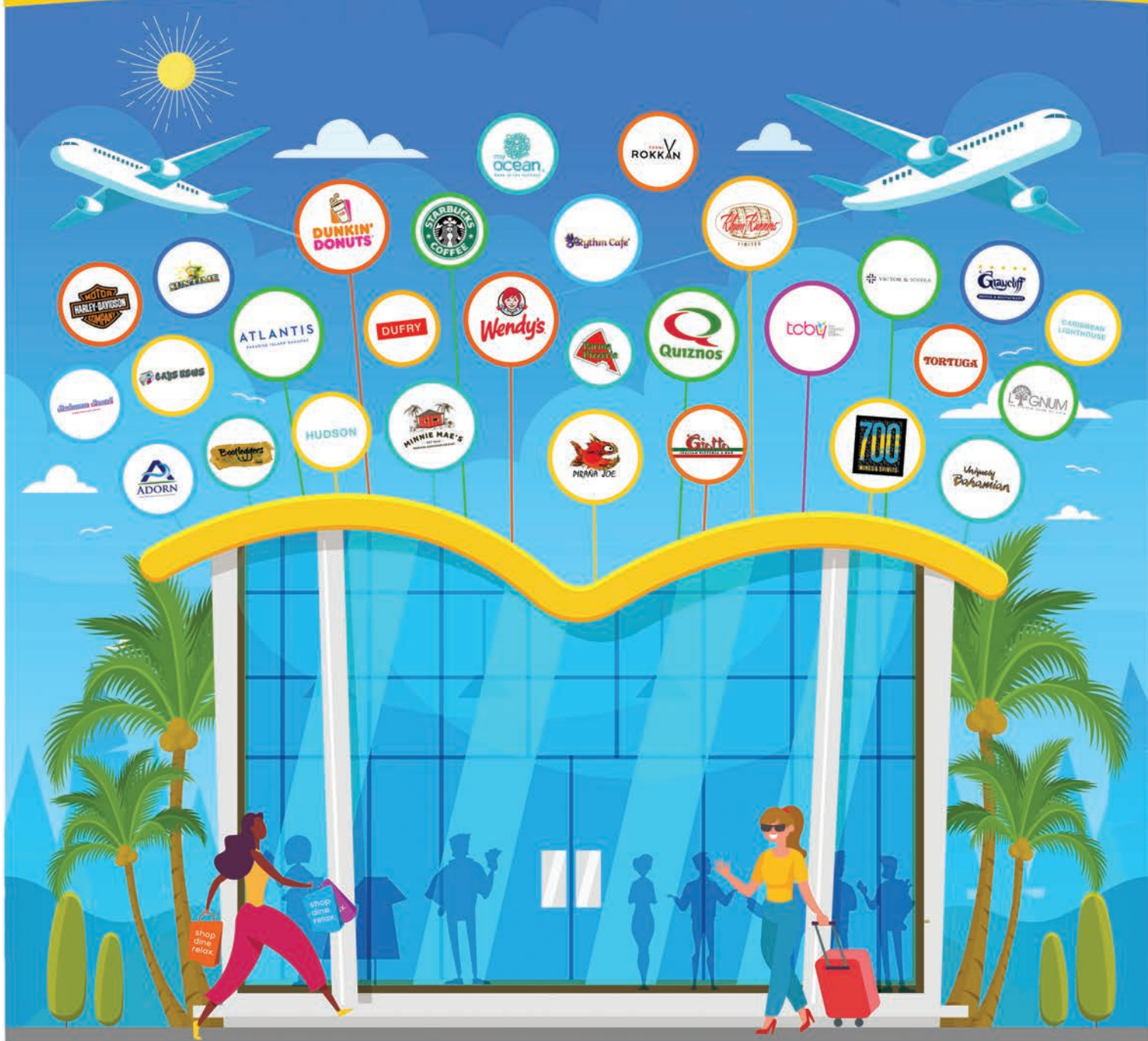


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Bahama Pearl

BAHAMA PEARL @ LPIA

*By Eldri Ferguson-Mackey and Khashan Poitier
Photographs courtesy of Cay Focus Photography and Bahama Pearl*

If you're an avid traveler, you know that there's nothing more frustrating than trying to locate that last-minute gift or forgotten "something" while at the airport. Fortunately, if your travel plans take you through Lynden Pindling International Airport (LPIA) in Nassau, you're almost certain to find everything you need with the help of a local retail partner—Bahama Pearl.

Bahama Pearl is a local novelty and convenience store that holds true to its name of being a "pearl". It's a rare retail find that offers its customers almost everything under the sun. From an array of local treasures to sundries and even the proverbial "needle in a hay-stack", Bahama Pearl has it all.

What's most amazing is that long before LPIA got its name, Bahama Pearl had made it its home, providing millions of annual airline travelers with the comfort and convenience of specialty and novelty items. Then owner, Althea Brown, was among the first to introduce the indigenous Bahamian straw work and artistic finds to airport customers. She coupled it with that ever so charming dose of customer service and the ability to select just the right inventory of products that not only met, but, exceeded her patrons' expectations.

Fast forward 46-plus years—Bahama Pearl has grown from a tiny store that was affectionally called "Hole in the Wall" to having three full locations at the airport. The shops are now run by Brown's daughters Shantell Brown, Verdel Brown and Velma Brown. Despite the growth, its new modern touches and vast selection of items, it manages to maintain its niche as a retail store that is still the one-stop-shop for gift-givers, last-minute shoppers and the "I just had to get it" traveler.



Althea Brown
Early Days of Bahama Pearl

"Our parents have worked incredibly hard to maintain this business and the livelihood of our family is tied to us running a successful operation," stated Shantell Brown. "We are more than just a store; we try to deliver an experience to travelers by presenting them with what they need, when they need it. We take extra care with selecting what we sell and almost every item represents years of knowledge of our customers' needs and purchasing patterns."



The Brown Family Circa 1989

Leadership Team:
Velma Brown, Cleverne Ellis,
Verdel Brown and Shantell Brown



When asked about their plans for the future of the store, she remarked, “We’ve come a long way and as our parents were diligent about passing the legacy on to us, we want to be in the position to do the same for our children—hence our commitment to differentiate ourselves with our products and customer service.”

So, as you travel through the airport and you’re frantic because you may have left something at home, don’t worry—there’s no need to panic. Simply browse through the aisles of Bahama Pearl and you can locate everything you need.

When you’re all done at Bahama Pearl, there are still lots to do at the retail concourses which feature a wide range of amenities including restaurants and

boutique stores that offer an array of items and local treasures. The best part is that each store or restaurant is no more than a three-minute walk away. So don’t just spend time sitting and waiting for your flight. Indulge and explore all that LPIA has to offer! Go on a treasure hunt for the perfect souvenir, a gift for the in-laws or a stuffed pig for the kid next door.

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Beth Stewart with her Bahamian Sweets

INDULGE YOUR SWEET TOOTH

By Shavaughn Moss

Photographs courtesy of Shavaughn Moss

Benny cake, peanut cake, coconut cake and coconut creams—quintessential Bahamian treats.

Beth Stewart, at age 79, is perpetuating Bahamian heritage by whipping up an assortment of quintessentially Bahamian sweets—benny cake, peanut cake, coconut cake and coconut cream—treats that have been staples in the community from time immemorial, and an age-old childhood indulgence.

Once upon a time, these homey treats were to be had everywhere. People made the simple treats and sold them out of their homes for extra funds, or sold them at various festivals around the country. You paid about a quarter for the treat of your choice, which in most instances was stored in a cleaned out and repurposed mayonnaise jar, and happily went about your business, nibbling on your sweet indulgence.

But just how sweet treats such as benny cake, coconut cream, peanut cake and coconut cake came to be is a story long forgotten. Stewart herself doesn't even know. All she knows is that for Bahamians across the generations, they're treats they were introduced to in childhood and never thought of who invented such simple, delightful treats.

To be honest, I actually never really thought about who first came up with the idea of these treats, or even why. As a kid, I just enjoyed.

As I attempted to find anyone who would have an inkling about the origins of these sweet treats, I reached out to someone who has spoken out extensively on Bahamian cuisine in Patricia Ginton-Meicholas, as well as Stewart, from Beth's Kitchen, who makes and sells these treats to this day—but neither of them knew

the history either as to who first came up with the ideas for the sweets. Both Stewart and Ginton-Meicholas say the sweet treats are embedded in Bahamian culture and are the result of both sides of Bahamian heritage—the African as well as the British, with the British coming into play specifically in reference to the coconut cream.

Ginton-Meicholas said people made use of what was available and that while the cream is British, the coconut was an addition by Bahamians.

Stewart said she doesn't know how the recipes—which are simply benny seeds, coconut and peanuts cooked with sugar, and sometimes water—came to be. All she knows is Bahamians inherited it.

The one thing I went into this article knowing for certain is that benny, also known as sesame, has its origins in Africa and is the word African slaves used for the seeds which were brought on slave ships from West Africa.

As a matter of fact, Stewart—whose sweets are sold in a major grocery store and are in demand as favors for all types of celebrations, from weddings to birthday parties and even corporate affairs—proudly states on her label: “perpetuating our heritage”.

But don't be fooled when you go in search of your treat, thinking you're looking for a sweet that entails butter, flour or cream—because the names of these quintessential treats are actually a misnomer. In no way are any of them cake-like in any shape, form or fashion.

Researching this story gave me the opportunity to reminisce about these goodies that starred in my childhood but that I've rarely taken the time to enjoy in recent times.

INDULGE YOUR SWEET TOOTH

Sinking my teeth into a just-made coconut cake and benny cake as I chatted with Stewart—where else but in the kitchen at her house where she makes her treats—I was flooded with memories of my childhood and visiting “cousins” in the Fox Hill community (one of the oldest Bahamian villages) in the eastern part of the island to take in the excitement of the annual Emancipation Day festivities held at what is referred to as the Fox Hill Parade Grounds. The Fox Hill Day Festival, the oldest festival in the country, held the second Tuesday in August annually, commemorates the freeing of enslaved Africans in the British colonies in 1834. During those forays of my youth, benny cakes, coconut cream and peanut cake were in abundance and to be had everywhere.

Stewart, who grew up in the quiet little village of Rolle Town, Exuma, remembers the older people in the settlement—grandmothers, goddies and aunts and other ladies in the community—producing the treats, which she said were always to be had at Christmas.

Stewart herself did not begin making the treats until 22 years ago when she found herself needing to raise funds to defray the cost of a trip to South Africa. Like Bahamians of the past who made the treats for extra money, she and her younger sister Edna Tinubu recalled how their cousin made the treats, and the rest, as they say, is history. Stewart and her sister have been making the treats ever since, and Stewart continues to make her treats under her Beth's Kitchen label even as she approaches her eighth decade.

You can find Stewart most days in her kitchen whipping up batches of the sweets for which she's become famous—so much so that she has even expanded on the original flavors of her youth, opting to add native flavors like mango, tamarind and pepper to give people options. As an enticement to younger generations to pique their interest in these homey treats, in today's world of the mass-produced she opts to make them in shapes outside of the name, such as stars, birds and even fish. She also offers the benny cake in nugget form, which are bite-sized flat pieces, balls and sticks; and when she packages the balls and sticks together, she calls them “bat and balls” in reference to a popular yesteryear pastime of Bahamian youth.

She plays on the shape themes with her benny pepper pips as well as her peanut and benny pops which actually look like popcorn.



Benny Cake

As for those coconut creams, which are usually red and white in color, Stewart has expanded that as well to offer what she calls her Junkanoo coconut cream, which is coconut cream in different colors.

One thing she doesn't stray from is packaging. She hand-cuts her homemade treats and always wraps them simply in plastic because she wants to retain the indigenous, homegrown look.

And there's one more sweet treat that you will have to hook up with a local to source out because it's not to be found in any grocery store—the “baggie” or “cup”. It's one of those “beat the heat” sweet treats that all Bahamian children love during the summer months, and have to knock on the door of someone's house to get, unless their parent makes it. It's a simple mixture of the flavor Kool-Aid of your choice, water and sugar, frozen in a plastic cup or sandwich bag. In days gone by, it was a normal sight to see a kid sucking and licking on their frozen treat during those lazy, hazy hot days. **UA**



Peanut Cake



Coconut Cake

Beth Stewart's
Junkanoo Coconut Cream Candies



Benny Balls



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SHAUNAE MILLER-UIBO

A BAHAMIAN JEWEL

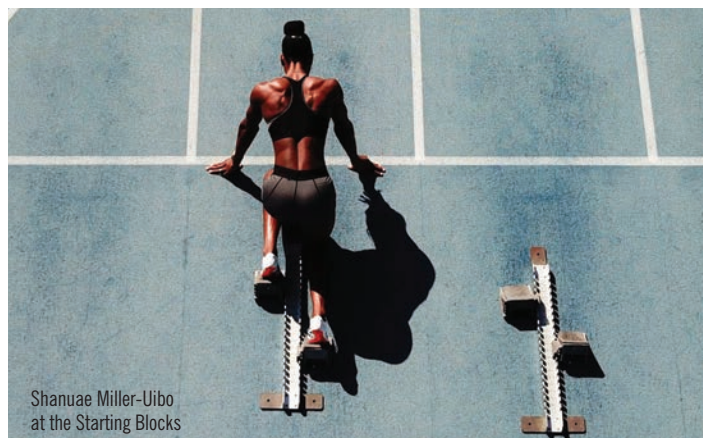
By Felicity Darville

Photographs courtesy of Stephen Gay

There's a magical moment when you are on board a Bahamasair flight and you look out of the window. It's the moment when the deep, dark blues of the Atlantic Ocean come to an end, and are immediately replaced with crystal clear waters made of the most stunning shades of turquoise. It's a breathtaking experience—one that Shaunae Miller-Uibo feels every time she is on board the nation's flag carrier. No matter how far around the world this Olympic gold athlete travels, she looks forward to that magical moment when she is back on the sunny shores of her beloved homeland.

Her family, friends and fans all adore her, and not just because she is breaking records and winning races at track meets globally. Shaunae has a sweet spirit that is evident in her bright smile. She is also quite humble—a virtue that stood out to me each time she responded with a shy giggle during her interview with *Up and Away*. She combines that down-to-earth quality with sheer determination, and together they have taken her straight to the pinnacle of her career.

Shaunae is the 400-metre (m) race Olympic champion of 2016, and currently holds unofficial world records in the 200m straight and the 300m indoor events. She also won gold in the 200m at the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

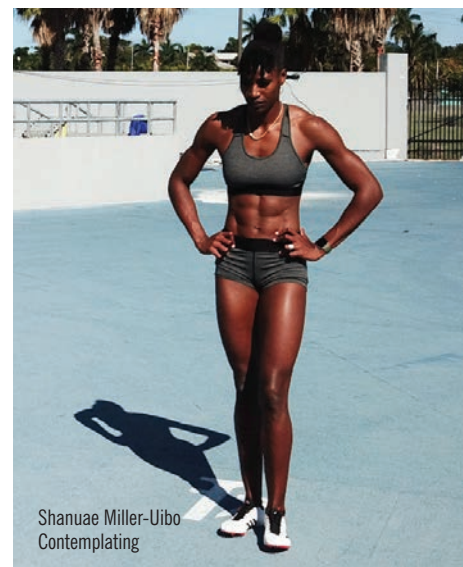


Shaunae Miller-Uibo
at the Starting Blocks

Shaunae Miller-Uibo
Working Out



Shaunae Miller-Uibo
and Husband Take Off



Shaunae Miller-Uibo
Contemplating

At the World Championships in Athletics, Shaunae claimed silver in the 400m in 2015 and 2019, and bronze in the 200m in 2017. When *Up and Away* connected with her, Shaunae and her husband, world-class decathlete Maicel Uibo, were in Orlando where they are focusing on training for the next Olympic Games. The 2020 Summer Olympics will be held in Tokyo, Japan, beginning on Friday, July 24. When Shaunae perches on those starting blocks in Tokyo, she knows that she will have the support of all Bahamians as she sprints towards gold again. The eyes of the nation will be on her with high hopes, a lot of prayers and tons of excitement.

"I always feel the support of the Bahamian people every time I step foot on the track; it's always a great feeling knowing that I have their support and I am just going to try my best to make them proud and do as well as I can," Shaunae said.

"We are very excited about the Olympics. It's a championship that comes every four years, but it's the same focus we are going in with this year that we go into every year—that's going out there and doing our best training as well as we can, and just putting our best foot forward. We are very excited with it. We are doing our work now and when the games come, we will leave it all to God and see where everything falls into place."

That laser-focus, and giving it her very best all year round and not just when she's preparing for a big race, got Shaunae this far. And now, as one of the best sprinters in the world, she's having even more magical moments—like when she's draped in the Bahamian flag, beaming with pride after winning a race.

Bahamasair and Shaunae both bear the nation's distinctive aquamarine, gold and black flag with pride, and the affection between them goes way back. Bahamasair is the airline that took her to Cat Island, where both of her parents have ancestry, during her childhood years. She knew that boarding the plane meant embarking upon an exciting summer filled with adventures on the beach and fun with family and friends. But there's another reason why Bahamasair holds

a special place in Shaunae's heart: her father was a pilot for the airline. She was always proud to see her dad in his uniform as he headed to work. Now, the tables have turned and Shaun Miller is proud to see his daughter being an ambassador for Bahamasair.

"Shaunae is a jewel to The Bahamas," said Bahamasair Managing Director Tracy Cooper.

"We are elated to have Shaunae onboard, representing Bahamasair and representing the country. As her father was a pilot for Bahamasair, we have always had some connection to the family. So, we are happy to have her."

Shaunae first started competing in track and field when she was six years old. Her mother was a softball player, and Shaunae would run around the bases during her mother's practice.

"I also loved running around the neighborhood with my cousins and friends," she said.

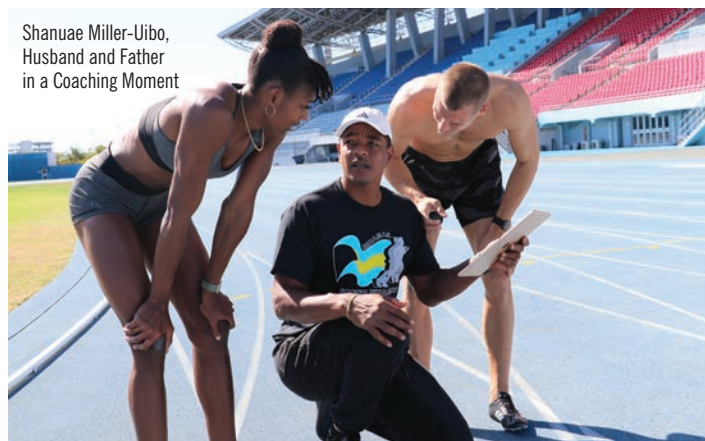
"I always enjoyed running, so my mom and dad put me in track and field. Growing up, I ran the 100[m], the 200, 400 and 800. I participated in long jump, high jump and shot put... I have had a chance to do it all! I have loved a lot of those events as well. But it wasn't until 2010 that I really got into just doing the 400. Before then, I was focusing more on the 100 and 200. I didn't really like it at first. But that was the year that I won CARIFTA, broke the record; I won the CAC, broke the record; then I won World Juniors and broke the international record. So, we figured I'm really good at this event. So we kept at it [and] eventually I fell in love with it. I love every aspect of it."

Coach Shaun has been molding Shaunae all of her life, helping her to hone her craft to be exactly where she is today. He is elated to see how far his little girl has come since the days she would share her Olympic dreams with him and with her mother, Mabelene. But their training did not only come in the form of athletics; her parents have led a great example of marriage and teamwork that Shaunae is now emulating in her own life.

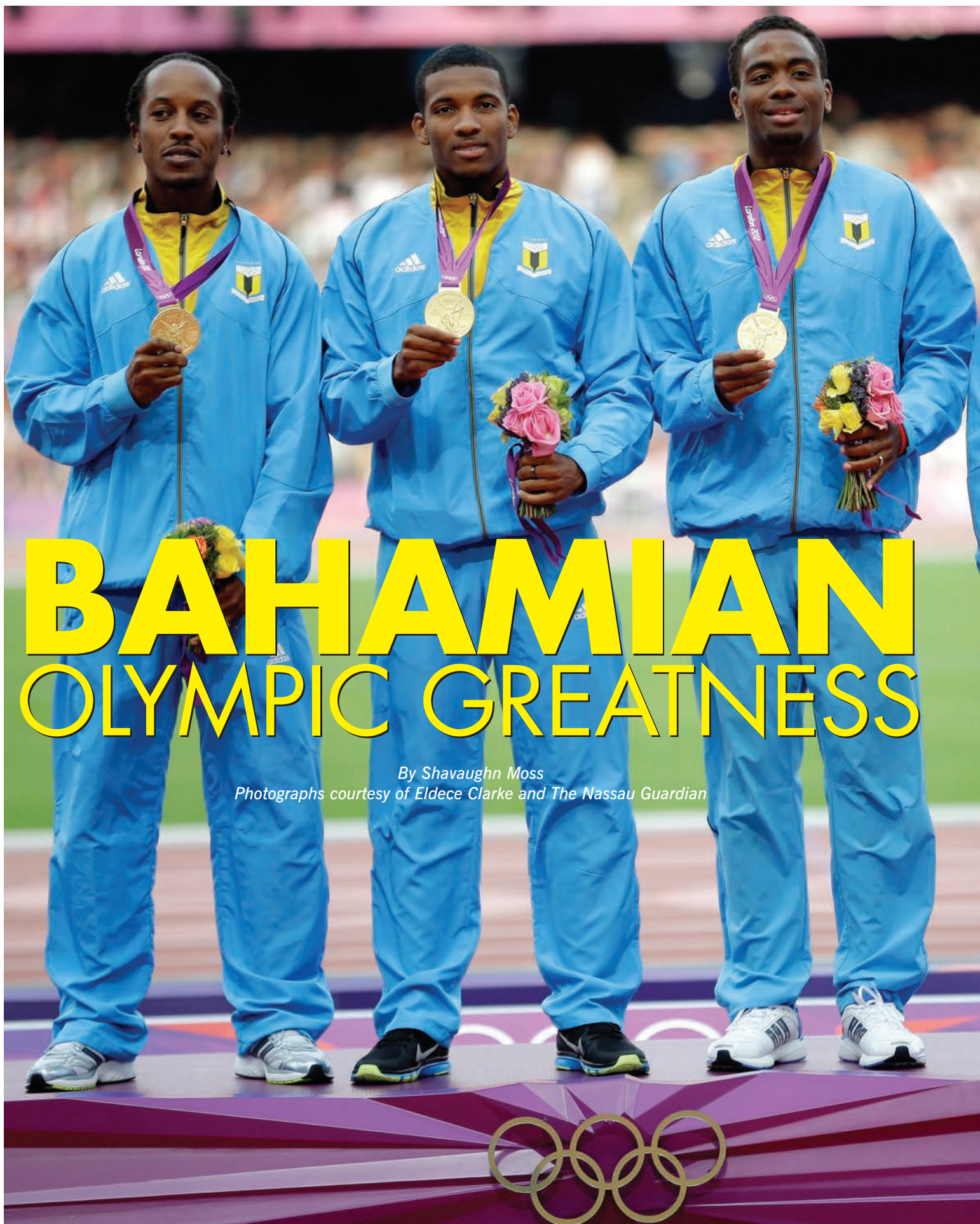
Up and Away spoke with Shaunae just days before her third wedding anniversary, and the Olympic star said: "It feels good! He is the love of my life. We are able to pull for each other seeing that we have the same job. We get to see our ins and outs, understand each other's struggles and support each other when everything comes into play. It's a really great feeling having him there with me and, going into year three, we want to continue to support each other. We will love each other the best we can and continue to enjoy life together."

Despite all the fame and glory on the track, this polite island girl with the beautiful smile actually prefers to be at home, snuggling with her husband on the couch and watching television. They enjoy playing with one another, playing with their dogs and competing against one another in family games.

She's at the height of her career. She has fans all over the world. She's loved in her husband's country, Estonia. She could be anywhere in the world, succeeding. But Shaunae Miller-Uibo is still excited whenever it's time to take a Bahamasair flight home, a place she knows people all over the world call "paradise". [UA](#)



Shaunae Miller-Uibo,
Husband and Father
in a Coaching Moment



BAHAMIAN OLYMPIC GREATNESS

*By Shavaughn Moss
Photographs courtesy of Eldece Clarke and The Nassau Guardian*





The Bahamas' gold medal-winning men's 4 x 400 metres team tops the podium at the 2012 London Olympic Games. Pictured from left: Chris Brown, Demetrius Pinder, Michael Mathieu and Ramon Miller. | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NASSAU GUARDIAN



The members of The Bahamas' women's 4 x 100 metres relay that are known the world over as the "Golden Girls" after winning the gold medal at the 2000 Sydney, Australia, Olympic Games. Pictured from left: Debbie Ferguson-McKenzie, Chandra Sturup, Pauline Davis-Thompson, Eldece Clarke and Savatheda Fynes. | PHOTO COURTESY OF ELDECE CLARKE

Almost everyone knows the fairytale of "The Little Engine That Could"—the takeaway is to teach the value of optimism and hard work. And then there's the story of The Bahamas, an island nation whose athletes have proven time and again that they are among the best on the world stage. This little country of approximately 380,000 people has 14 medals to its credit—six gold, two silver and six bronze by Bahamians in just 16 Olympiads. This summer, as Bahamian athletes prepare to put their best foot forward at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan, the trend of thought is that when all is said and done, The Bahamas could come away with possibly another three medals.

The country's total medal haul was realized from nine Olympic Games—one gold and one bronze won at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Games; one gold in the 2012 London Olympics; one silver and one bronze at the 2008 Beijing, China, Olympics; one gold and one bronze at the 2004 Athens, Greece, Olympics; two gold and one bronze at the 2000 Sydney Olympics; one silver at the 1996 Atlanta, USA, Olympics; one bronze at the 1992 Barcelona, Spain, Olympics; one gold at the 1964 Tokyo, Japan, Olympics; and one bronze at the 1956 Melbourne, Australia, Olympics.

Medals have been won by Bahamians in the disciplines of athletics and sailing—12 medals in athletics (five gold, two silver and five bronze) and two medals in sailing (one gold and one bronze).

The 2000 Sydney, Australia, Olympics was the biggest single Games medal haul for The Bahamas, with three medals earned in athletics—two gold and one bronze.

Pauline Davis-Thompson earned individual gold in the women's 200 metres (m); and she teamed up with fellow sprint sensations Savatheda Fynes, Chandra Sturup, Debbie Ferguson-McKenzie and Eldece Clarke to stun the world as they romped their way to the women's 4 x 100m title win to ink their names in the annals of history, becoming known nationally and the world over as the "Golden Girls".

The men refused to be left out of podium glory, with Andretti Bain, Michael Mathieu, Andrae Williams and Chris Brown striking for a bronze medal in the men's 4 x 400m relay.

Bahamian athletes won two medals—one gold and one bronze—at the 2004 Athens, Greece, Games, with Tonique Williams-Darling continuing Bahamian athletics greatness in her amazing gold medal run in the women's 400m. Ferguson-McKenzie ran to a bronze medal win in the women's 200m that same year.

Another two medals—a silver and bronze—were won in 2008 in Beijing, China. Bain, Mathieu, Williams and Brown came together for a silver showing in the men's 4 x 400m relay; while Leevan Sands popped a bronze medal jump in the men's triple jump.

Two medals—1 gold and 1 bronze—were also the order of the day at the 2016 Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, Games at which Shaunae Miller ran (or dove, or fell, according to your perspective) into a gold medal in the women's 400m. That Olympiad also saw Mathieu and Brown coming together with Alonzo Russell, Steven Gardiner and Stephen Newbold in the bronze showing in the men's 4 x 400m relay.

At the 2012 London Olympics, Mathieu and Brown teamed up with Ramon Miller and Demetrius Pinder for a Bahamian men's gold medal strike in the men's 4 x 400m relay—the lone medal to be had at those Games.

Prior to that, in 1996, Clarke, Sturup, Fynes and Davis-Thompson ran to the silver medal in the women's 4 x 100m relay, the first medal won by Bahamians on the track. Ferguson-McKenzie and Philippa Arnett-Willie served as alternates.

Frank Rutherford holds the distinction of being the first Bahamian athletics medal winner, having popped a bronze medal performance in the men's triple jump at the 1992 Barcelona, Spain, Olympics. Rutherford's bronze medal was the country's third medal in its Olympic appearances. After that bronze showing, the floodgates opened in athletics and Bahamian athletes would not let up.



Sir Durward Knowles, left, and Cecil Cooke were The Bahamas' first "Golden Boys", sailing to a gold medal win in Star class sailing at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan. | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NASSAU GUARDIAN



Pauline Davis-Thompson with her 2000 Sydney, Australia, women's 200 metres gold medal. A decade after the Sydney Olympics, American Marion Jones was stripped of her medal after admitting to steroid use. Davis-Thompson was declared the winner and received the gold medal, which she said she always knew within herself she had earned on the track. | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NASSAU GUARDIAN

But before Bahamian athletes made their presence felt in track and field, the strikes were felt at the Olympic level on the water.

Like all great stories, The Bahamas' Olympic accomplishments began many years ago with two people with big dreams.

In 1948, Durward Knowles and Sloane Farrington qualified to participate in the Games of the XIV Olympiad in London. The Games were the first Olympics to be televised, although few people at the time owned television sets. The Games' ceremonies were officially opened by King George VI, and Knowles and Farrington represented Great Britain. As a result of their outstanding performance at those Games, it was decided that upon their return home the time had come for the formation of an Olympic association for The Bahamas.

Knowles and Farrington hold the distinction of having won The Bahamas' first medal—a bronze medal in 1956 in Melbourne, Australia, in Star class sailing.

Several years after his initial Olympic appearance, Knowles teamed up with Cecil Cooke to become the country's first "Golden Boys" as they sailed to a gold medal win in Star class sailing during the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan. It was during those Japan Games that Thomas Augustus Robinson, after whom the country's national track and field stadium is named, would be remembered for becoming the country's first track finalist at the Olympic level.

Heading into the 2020 Tokyo, Japan, Games, The Bahamas is expected to field teams in athletics and aquatics among the 33 sports and 22 Paralympic sports to be contested at the July 24 through August 9 XXXII Summer Olympiad.

Team Bahamas will be a mix of youth and veteran senior athletes, according to Romell "Fish" Knowles, Bahamas Olympic Committee (BOC) chief. "We feel fairly good going into these Games," said Knowles.

Quarter-milers Shaunae Miller-Uibo and Steven Gardiner are expected to lead the Bahamian charge.

Davis-Thompson and Ferguson-McKenzie hold the record for being the most decorated individual Bahamian Olympic athletes with three medals each.

Davis-Thompson's medals were gold in the women's 200m and women's 4 x 100m relay, both at the 2000 Sydney, Australia, Games; and silver in the women's 4 x 100m relay in 1996 in Atlanta.

Ferguson-McKenzie was a member of the 2000 Sydney, Australia, Olympic Games gold medal women's 4 x 100m relay team; a member of the silver medal 1996

Atlanta Olympic Games women's 4 x 100m team; and she also won a bronze medal in the women's 200m at the 2004 Athens, Greece, Olympic Games.

On the men's side, Chris Brown is the most decorated Bahamian Olympic male athlete, with four men's 4 x 400m relay medals to his credit—a gold medal from the 2012 London Games; a silver in 2008 from the Beijing, China, Games; and bronze medals won at the 2000 Sydney, Australia, Olympic Games and 2016 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Olympic Games.

Looking toward the 2020 Tokyo Games, the now retired Davis-Thompson said she's proud of her fellow Bahamian athletes. She said they are gifted and talented, and she wants them to continue to uplift the Bahamian people as they compete—especially, she said, as young, impressionable children will be "glued" to their television sets watching them.

Davis-Thompson competed in five Olympiads—the first in 1984 in Los Angeles, and bowing out after an epic 2000 showing in Australia, with Olympic appearances for The Bahamas in 1988 in Seoul, South Korea; 1992 in Barcelona, Spain; and 1996 in Atlanta, USA, in between.

She recalls competing at her first three Olympics and not attaining a medal podium standing, but refusing to quit.

"I wanted to stand at attention and hear my national anthem played and not hear athletes from other countries talking down to me that The Bahamas doesn't have any athletes and would do nothing. I knew [Olympic gold] was coming. I wanted all those athletes that said we wouldn't do anything to me to hear my national anthem played."

After Barcelona, Davis-Thompson said she visualized what was to be the Golden Girls' relay medal to come—and spoke to Clarke, Sturup, Fynes and Ferguson-McKenzie about coming together for the effort, with Clarke backing her up. The Bahamas struck hard at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games for the silver in the women's 4 x 100m. They followed that win with a gold medal romping in Sydney, Australia, in 2000 where Davis-Thompson ran second to American Marion Jones for the silver in the women's 200m. A decade after the Sydney Olympics, Jones was stripped of her medal after admitting to steroid use. Davis-Thompson was declared the winner and awarded the gold medal, which she said she always knew within herself she had earned on the track.



Frank Rutherford holds the distinction of being the first Bahamian athletics medal winner, having popped a bronze medal performance in the men's triple jump at the 1992 Barcelona, Spain, Olympics. Rutherford's bronze medal was the country's third medal in its Olympic appearances. | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NASSAU GUARDIAN



Shaunae Miller, The Bahamas' second women's 400 metres gold medalist, in her epic finish at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Olympic Games. | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NASSAU GUARDIAN



Tonique Williams-Darling crosses the line in the winner's spot as the first Bahamian female to win the women's 400 metres at the 2004 Athens, Greece, Olympics. | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NASSAU GUARDIAN

"I knew within my heart that I was the gold medalist," she said.

The Bahamas' national anthem has been played and the flag has been raised six times since 1956. Like that little train that could, The Bahamas has proven time and again that it is the little nation with great athletes that have done and will continue to do.

The Bahamas first participated in the Olympic Games in 1952 and has sent athletes to compete in every Summer Olympic Games since then, except when they participated in the American-led boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics.

Bahamians have competed in the disciplines of athletics, sailing, aquatics, tennis, boxing, wrestling and rowing at the Olympics, and have seen podium-topping successes in athletics and sailing.

A little-known fact is that a Bahamian wrestling team, Robert Nihon and his father Alexis, competed at the 1968 Mexico City Games.

At the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, The Bahamas' Olympic story seemed to come full circle on the water as Emily Morley made history when she became the first rower to represent the country in women's single sculls. [UA](#)

A composite image for a Vita Malt advertisement. On the left, a woman with curly hair and sunglasses is smiling and holding a bottle of Vita Malt Classic. On the right, three bottles of Vita Malt Classic are displayed against a green background. The bottles are labeled 'VITA MALT Classic' and 'VITA MALT Acai'. The text 'VITALIZE Naturally!' is written in a large, stylized font. The logo for 'CP' (Crown Peak Brewery Limited) is visible in the bottom right corner.

BAHAMIAN ATHLETES WHO COMPETED IN THE OLYMPICS

1948 TO 2016

Sloane Elmo Farrington
Durward Knowles
Kenneth Harrison Albury
Godfrey Walter Higgs
Basil Trevor Kelly
Basil Herbert McKinney
Donald Carlton Pritchard
Thomas Augustus Robinson
Hugh Bullard
Maurice George Kelly
Percival Andrew Knowles
Godfrey Lightbourne
Sigmund Pritchard
George Leroy Ramsay
Robert Hallam Symonette
George Reginald Collie
Cecil George Cooke
Robert Radford Eardley
Godfrey Kenneth Kelly
Hartley Cecil Saunders
Anthony Richard Balfour
Timothy Edward Barrett
Edwin Luther Kevin Johnson
Leslie Miller
Alexis Nihon
Robert Nihon
Bernard Jonathan Nottage

Gerald Lloyd Wisdom
Geoffrey Burnside
Laurence Burnside
Walter Edward Callender
Montagu Roscoe Higgs
Timothy Lockhart-Harrison
Christopher McKinney
Claudette Karen Powell
Franklin Benjamin Rahming
Daniel Smith
Roland Craig Symonette
Walter Edward Callender
Shonell Ferguson
Leonard Jervis
Andrew Knowles
Bruce Knowles
Fletcher Lewis
Philp Robins
Michael Russell
Clive Sands
Michael Sands
Daniel Smith
Eldece Clarke
Bradley Cooper
Gary Davis
Pauline Davis-Thompson
Oralee Fowler
Deborah Greene
Stephen Hanna
Stephen Kelly
Stephen Larrimore
Audrick Lightbourne
David Morley
Thomas Nesbet

Sean Nottage
Dudley Parker
Philip Pinder
Gregory Rolle
Lyndon Sands
Andrew Eugene Seymour
Joseph Wells
Stephen Wray
Norbert Elliott
Laverne Eve
Garvin Ferguson
Stephen Hann
Jacqueline Edwards
Paterson Johnson
George Knowles
Andrew Eugene Seymour
Lori Roberts
Franklin Rutherford
Fabian Whymms
Timothy Eneas
Timothy Eneas
Craig Hepburn
Troy Kemp





Renward Wells
Tonique Williams-Darling
Christine Amertil
Christopher Brown
Dennis Darling
Dominic Demeritte
Jacqueline Lois Elizabeth Edwards
Sylvanus Hepburn
Jeremy Daniel Knowles
Eldece Lewis
Mark Merklein
Christopher Murray
Nicholas Rees
Wellington Saunders
Shandria Brown
Tameka Clarke

Shamar Sands
Donald Thomas
Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace
Andrae Williams
Sheniqua Ferguson
Ivanique Kemp
Shaunae Miller
V'Alonee Robinson
Anthonique Strachan
Bianca Stuart
Trevor Barry
Warren Fraser
Raymond Higgs
Wesley Neymour
Demetrius Pinder
Adrian Griffith
Shavez Hart
Jamial Rolle
Shavez Hart

Allan Murray
Roger Smith
Mark Knowles
Wendell Lawrence
William Holowesko
Ian Thompson
Phillipa Arnett-Willie
Brian Babbs
Theron Cooper
Robert Anthony Dunkley
Debbie Ferguson-McKenzie
Crystal Finlayson
Savatheda Fynes
Billy Michael Holowesko
Mark Gordon Holowesko
Iram Lewis
Troy McIntosh
Avarid Moncur
Alan Mortimer
Timothy Munnings
Carl Oliver
Myles Henry Asa Pritchard
James Rolle
Chandra Sturup
Joseph Styles
Andrew Tynes

Aaron Cleare
Dennis Darling
Nikia Deveaux
Nathaniel McKinney
Osbourne Moxey
Leevan Sands
Andrae Williams
Chris Vythoulkas
Derrick Atkins
Andretti Bain
Elvis Vereance Burrows
Tameka Clarke
Alana Dillette
Sheniqua Ferguson
Toureano Johnson
Michael Mathieu
Ramon Miller
Devin Mullings
Jamaal Rolle

Jamial Rolle
Teray Smith
Steven Gardiner
Alonzo Russell
Jeffrey Gibson
Stephen Newbold
Jamal Wilson
Latario Collie-Minns
Tynia Gaither
Sheniqua Ferguson
Pedrya Seymour
Emily Morley
Dustin Tynes
Joanna Evans
Devynne Charlton
Adanaca Brown



SUSTAINABLE FASHION:

LOOKING GOOD WHILE DOING GOOD

By Jean Barrett-Sommerville
Photographs courtesy of Joey Sommerville

It's no secret that climate change caused by human activity is upon us, globally wreaking havoc in many forms, including record-breaking hurricanes and fires. It's also no secret that many of us are overwhelmed by this, either directly or indirectly. We wonder what we can do to promote a safer, more meaningful future for our children and grandchildren.

Greta Thunberg, the young climate activist from Sweden, has said, "The climate crisis has already been solved. We already have the facts and solutions. All we have to do is wake up and change."

Thunberg has also said, "It always seems impossible until it has been done," and, "You are never too small to make a difference."

What's not as well known is that the fashion industry plays a substantial part in contributing to the current crisis. Today, especially with social media saturating our lives, we look at fashion as something to "keep up



Upcycled Blue Skirt

Combined Front and Back Upcycled Green T-Shirt



with". The availability of cheap, trendy clothing is at an all time high, encouraging us to continually buy and discard our clothes as never before in history.

This culture of consumption, of chasing trends and logos, is fueled by billions of advertising dollars, and is alluring with its promise of enhancing our lives and sense of self worth and achievement. But as author Elizabeth L. Cline points out in her book "Over-Dressed", it comes at a huge cost to us all, damaging economies and the environment.

In the past, our parents and grandparents knew how to "make do", creating utility and beauty out of what was at hand. This generated craftsmanship and pride. We valued the things they made, including clothes. We cared for them, keeping them clean and mended, perhaps passing them down as a special gift, to be worn and treasured. It's time to take another look at what this could mean for us today.

Imagine: What if you could save money, look better and have more individual style, experience creativity as a source of joy, share resources and skills with your friends and community AND have a positive impact on climate change? Upcycling clothes is one way to do this. Many of us are familiar with the concept of recycling. Upcycling, on the other hand, means reusing materials in a way that creates something of higher value than the original.

For example, upcycling means taking a few T-shirts that your cousin didn't want anymore and turning them into a one-of-a-kind top that turns heads.

Upcycling means removing the sleeves from a donated jacket to make a vest. Perhaps then adding those sleeves to a different jacket, creating another totally unique style. It means cutting off the top of a discarded sundress, adding a waistband and suddenly you have a trendy maxi skirt.

Sometimes it means making a patchwork scarf from the scraps of other clothes. Can't sew? Ask your

auntie if she'll show you how to use her sewing machine. If possible, go online and learn the art of decorative mending. Hand sewing is beautiful and requires very little investment, except perhaps your time, as the "slow clothing" or "slow fashion" movements remind us.

Even if you don't sew, there are ways to upcycle clothes. Cut thin strips of denim and tie them together to make a necklace or scarf. The more you wash and fray the edges, the better it will look. Perhaps you'll end up using beads and knots to further enhance the design. There's truly no limit to the creative possibilities.

The other thing to remember is that sustainable fashion is for all of us. Even if we don't make the clothes ourselves, we can still support those who do. We can buy from the small businesses and artists who create sustainable and/or upcycled pieces. We can take our fashion dollars and put them back into our communities, enriching us all.

We can further educate ourselves about fast fashion and sustainability. There are currently many books available, including those by Cline and another favorite of mine, Jane Milburn, an Australian activist who wrote "Slow Clothing—Finding Meaning in What We Wear". They've painstakingly included many resources, including websites and Instagram feeds available for further study. Additionally, we can share our enthusiasm and knowledge as we learn more about what this means for our world.



Upcycled Red Tassel Top

Sustainable fashion provides so much more than the obvious benefits of affordability, creativity and the joy of personal style. It provides an opportunity to connect young and old, sharing skills and craftsmanship, history and pride. It's an opportunity to do our small, individual part regarding the climate crisis.

It enables us to clothe ourselves in a tapestry of love and hope, now and for generations to come. Let's think about that each time we get dressed. I can't think of a better way to look good. **UA**



Upcycled Denim Scarf



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Amos Ferguson
The Pineapple Man, 1991
The National Collection



LITTLE WATER CAY

Sanctuary for the TCI Rocky Iguana

By David Newlands

Photographs courtesy of David Newlands and Turks and Caicos National Trust

One of the many beautiful destinations serviced by Bahamasair, visit Bahamasair.com to book your travel to the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Visitors to the Turks and Caicos Islands have a rare opportunity to explore a unique national park that is untouched by civilization. Here, they can get a glimpse into what the country would look like if it was never developed and nature existed uninterrupted. While only a short distance from the bustle and development of Providenciales, Little Water Cay—also known as “Iguana Island”—allows visitors to explore the home of an endangered animal that can only be found in the local archipelago—the Turks and Caicos Rocky Iguana. This iguana is the largest native land animal in the country, and while there are various sub-species to be found across the Caribbean, these iguanas can only be found here. Little Water Cay is dedicated to protecting these creatures, allowing them to thrive in peace. This beautiful cay pulls visitors from the trappings of resorts, and grants them a rare opportunity to encounter these beautiful animals as well as many more local flora and fauna up-close.

Located off the northeastern coast of Providenciales, the cay is uninhabited, allowing nature to flourish. It is maintained as a heritage site by the Turks and Caicos National Trust, a local non-profit organization that seeks to safeguard the national, historical and cultural heritage of the islands. Accessible by a short boat ride, this park affords visitors the remarkable experience of walking in a unique biosphere where they can see the iguanas as well as various rare birds and plant life native to the country and which would otherwise be difficult to encounter.

Visitors arriving by boat will be greeted by a small National Trust Welcome Center next to the main dock, where they can purchase tickets for trails and tours, as well as learn about various ongoing projects and the local flora and fauna. The base tickets are only \$10, which allows visitors to access the main boardwalk. This elevated wood platform spans the southern coast of the cay, and is often frequented by bolder iguanas. While these local “residents” are relatively shy, visitors can usually get within a few feet of them before they run away, as they are accustomed to human traffic on the boardwalk. Guests are told

to stay on the boardwalk, as the soft sands beneath house nests of iguana eggs which are buried, hidden from the naked eye, to protect from predators.

For those who are interested in seeing more than the boardwalk, there is a guided tour on an extended trail which takes you up to the northern shore of the island for \$15. This extended trail takes you deeper into the cay, allowing for further immersion into nature. Rather than an intrusive boardwalk, this trail is a packed earth path that weaves through the trees, allowing visitors to enter the seasonal marshlands and mangrove ponds to take a closer look at nature. It is on this trail where those with a keen eye may spot some of the other residents of Little Water Cay, such as ospreys hunting for fish or the various egrets and herons that inhabit the cay.

For an additional \$5, guests can visit Half Moon Bay, an expansive beach formed by storms throughout the years and which connects Little Water Cay to Water Cay. Even here, visitors can spot iguanas hiding in the vegetation in the dunes. Visitors may also spot stingrays near the shore, as well as conch a bit farther out. Many tour companies choose to set up picnics here, however, given ongoing efforts to combat invasive species such as rats, who are attracted to trash, these acts are discouraged as they pose potential threats to the iguana population. Even without any food, Half Moon Bay is a beautiful part of the cays where visitors can relax and drink in the cay’s natural beauty.

While this beautiful cay is an ideal attraction for visitors, its primary purpose is actually a scientific one. Working with the Darwin Association since 2017,





the National Trust seeks to preserve the critically endangered species of iguanas, and local boas, which have become threatened by the development of the islands. With the sudden development of the country, which has brought in invasive species and domesticated animals, these once dominant local species have come dangerously close to extinction. As such, the National Trust and Darwin Association have been working on preserving the species through various projects. There is also an educational campaign that informs citizens and tourists alike about these animals, and the importance of nature preservations. Ticket proceeds go directly to the National Trust, allowing the organization to operate and continue to preserve the heritage sites of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

If you wish to support the preservation efforts of the local heritage and wildlife, you can visit the National Trust website at www.tcnationaltrust.org. The trust also accepts donations in various sizes, by ways of a tiered membership system. The system is extremely flexible, allowing any and all to help preserve the small archipelago. Visitors that wish to explore Little Water Cay can purchase tickets through many of the local tour companies as well as some resorts. Please remember that these fees go directly towards the preservation efforts, so if someone mentions a free tour, please kindly notify them that the National Trust offers tickets in order to help



maintain the cay. In doing so, you will help maintain the cay. In doing so, you will help maintain the natural beauty and facilities of Little Water Cay. [UA](#)

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april 2021

30



Christ Church Cathedral



Stained-Glass Windows

THE CITY CHURCH

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

By Kendea Smith

Photographs courtesy of L. Roscoe Dames

The City of Nassau would not be what it is today without the construction of one monumental structure—Christ Church Cathedral. It is known as the mother church of the Anglican Diocese of The Bahamas, but Nassau was not deemed a city until the Cathedral was built and so one could not exist without the other. The cathedral located on George Street, with its beautiful stained glass windows and its grand structures, has a glorious history behind it. And so it's little wonder why hundreds of tourists flock to the church on a weekly basis.

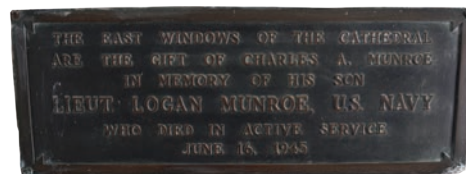
THE STRUCTURE BUILDS NASSAU

The first church on the current site was destroyed by Spanish occupation in 1684. But it was not until 1723 that the Vestry of the Cathedral, the oldest elected board in The Bahamas, that a succession of structures followed. But the present site of the cathedral was erected in 1830 and the church finally was completed in 1841. It was during the time of the reign of Queen Victoria in 1861 that the Diocese of Nassau was created. The town of Nassau was decreed and declared when Rev. Charles Caufield travelled to England with the designation of Christ Church as a cathedral.

One of the most beautiful aspects of Christ Church Cathedral is its stunning triple stained glass windows that were first installed in 1866. The windows, with their myriad of colors, center on Jesus Christ on the cross, with the Virgin Mary on the left and St. John on the right. The windows on the left and right depict the resurrection and the ascension respectively. The windows were damaged in a hurricane in 1929 and completely destroyed when a fire swept through the cathedral's

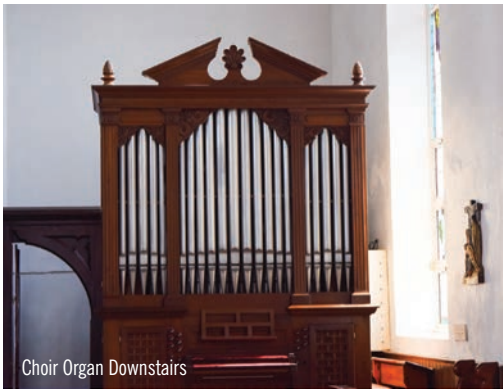
George Street location in 1942. It was then boarded up until 1949. Soon after, Charles Munroe, an American, gifted the cathedral with the current eastern windows in memory of his son, Lt. Logan Munroe, who was killed in World War II. Munroe was a regular visitor of the church and commissioned M. Fassi-Cadet of Nice, France, for the windows' fabrication.

Time passed and the church underwent extensive restoration during the early 1990s. The north and south windows were crafted by Statesville Stained Glass Company of North Carolina in 1995.



MUSIC TO OUR EARS: AN HISTORIC ORGAN

Another important aspect of Christ Church Cathedral is its historic organs, which date back to 1864. Created by Lewis & Sons, the air supply was by manual labor until 1920 when an electric pump was installed. The Kimball Organ Company rebuilt the aging instrument and moved the pipes from the front of the church to the west gallery in 1935. After weathering hurricane and fire damage, the Lewis organ was finally retired in 1954 and replaced by a Walker Organ. In 1986, two organs were installed, both of which were made by the Oberlinger Company. The great organ is arguably the finest in the region. It is built with three manuals, 64 ranks and 3,200 pipes. The instrument was famously featured in the American Guild of Organists.



Choir Organ Downstairs



Organ Upstairs



Lectern

TIME WILL TELL: THE TOWER CLOCK

The existing tower gained a clock in 1865. A careful look at the tower reveals the site of the clock as it was is located three feet lower than the present faces. The new clock was made in 1926 by Thwaites and Reed of London—one of the world's oldest clock makers. They describe the clock as a "fine example of the flatbed turret clock". The clock has a cast iron frame and sits on a horse of solid oak. The wheels and bushes are brass with steel pinions and arbors. It has a recoil anchor escapement. The going train drives a clutched bevel gear to a connecting rod that leads the motion of the work of three clock faces. These are 48 inches of diameter of convex copper painted black. The hands, minute markers and numerals are also copper, decorated with gold leaf.

THE CATHEDRAL WILL GROW

According to Dean Harry Bain, who is the fourth Bahamian head of Christ Church Cathedral, the cathedral is not the state church, though it once was. However, it is still the chosen church for most official government Christian services like

state funerals, the Opening of the Legal Year and Remembrance Day; and if a royal were to visit, they would probably attend a service here.

"The church itself is a city stronghold and it is an historical site," Bain said in an interview with *Up and Away*. "The Cathedral also has a large outreach, especially our social outreach that looks out for the homeless, many of whom live in the city."

He added that Christ Church Cathedral is also pivotal because it is located in the country's business center—Downtown Bay Street. Last year, Christ Church Cathedral held its popular Ash Wednesday service at Pompey Square.

"The Cathedral is unique because it is not like a Parish Church which is centered around residences. The draw of the cathedral for members are some of the ministries that we offer like the music ministry. It is a dynamic church and a church that we know will be around for a long time," Bain said.

Services are held throughout the week. On Sunday, there are four services: 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. There are also services throughout the week from Monday to Friday. [UA](#)

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april 2021

32



"Mouth To Mouth", 2019, Jeffrey Meris
Plastic Bottles, Hoses, Fiberglass, Resin, Steel Chaise Lounge

YOUNG LIONS

OUR ART CULTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

By Jodi Minnis | Photographs courtesy of the artist

Landscape images of luscious Poinciana trees realistically rendered by Eddie Minnis and colorful, fringing crepe paper meticulously painted by the late R. Brent Malone arise whenever conversations about Bahamian art occur. However, as time progressed, the abstracted woodcuts of John Cox and multimedia prints of Kendra Frorup paved the way for future generations of artists to define their Bahamianness and their artistic expression on their own terms. While renderings of landscape paintings, scrapes and scribbles and Junkanoo portraits can still be seen, the "young lions" of today have stretched ideas of what we can produce, where we can be celebrated and how art is to be interacted with.

The presence of Bahamian artists on international platforms is growing, and amongst those artists sits Jeffrey Meris. Meris, b. 1991, centers his work on the dichotomy of being Haitian-Bahamian and tackles issues of migration, home and belonging. Meris started his academic journey at the College of The Bahamas, where he received an Associates of Arts, and has recently obtained his MFA in visual arts from Columbia University (2019). Meris uses familiar objects and life castings to construct kinetic sculptures and installation-based works. Natural objects like sponges are often juxtaposed to industrial materials such as concrete; and the presence of welding and metal work take prominence within his practice as well. He also recreates simple actions such as breathing through plastic bottles, tubes and a motor to command the audience's attention to the quiet yet striking repetition.

His ingenious use of material to relay intimate and universal actions landed him a place at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine last summer, and most recently the NXTHVN Studio Fellowship in New Haven, Connecticut. Meris' climb within the contemporary art scene in the United States is a testament to the growing recognition of Bahamian artists outside of the country.

Although Angelika Wallace-Whitfield is not moving through the U.S., her words of affirmation, "Hope is A Weapon", are making their way throughout The Bahamas on T-shirts, hats and bags. What started as a proposal for the ninth National Exhibition for the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas (NAGB) has evolved into a movement, especially post-Hurricane Dorian. Wallace-Whitfield, b. 1993, studied at the College of The Bahamas and received her BA Honors Degree in the history and philosophy of art (2017).

In 2018, Wallace-Whitfield drove around the island of New Providence with "Hope is a Weapon" in a stencil and spray painted the tag on random areas on the street. The tags were photographed and shared on social media. This street art endeavor has catapulted—giving the same reverence to spray paint on concrete sidewalks that would be given to oil paintings on a gallery wall. The highlight of this movement was seeing the volunteers for Hurricane Dorian relief efforts adorn the shirts while greeting survivors, packaging food and distributing supplies. Furthermore, Wallace-Whitfield held several pop-up shops to raise money for Hurricane Dorian relief efforts and donated 100% of the proceeds to those efforts.



"Hope Is A Weapon", 2019, Angelika Wallace-Whitfield

Referencing Hurricane Dorian, the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas opened “Refuge”, a group exhibition, to document and to commemorate the tragedy and resilience of that time. One of the participating artists, Cydne Coleby, used the opportunity to recreate family portraits through new media collages for the exhibition. Coleby, b. 1993, reintroduced herself to the visual arts community in the ninth National Exhibition at the NAGB with self portraits emphasizing the importance of self love. Her mixed media portraits caused a stir because of her boldness, but Coleby stands firm in her digital renderings and continues to create illustrative works of art. Coleby’s commitment to her new media practice shows the breath of our contemporary art scope.

She expressed, “Transitioning into new media was natural from years of exploring graphic design. While I still do have a love for traditional mediums, I typically approach those materials in layers as I would in any graphic design software. I’m thinking about the user’s experience and user interface and exploring the possibilities of this media as we are immersed in this digital age.”

Coleby also wants to explore animation and other digital varieties such as virtual reality. Also holding an Associates of Art from the College of The Bahamas, Coleby anticipates participating in an exhibition in Paris later this year.

Another participant in “Refuge”, Matthew Rahming is redefining our engagement with ceramics in The Bahamas. On the heels of the late Denis Knight and other well-known ceramicists like Jessica Colebrooke, Rahming, b. 1994, uses clay,



“Specimen”, 2019, Cydne Jasmin Coleby
Digital Collage

limestone, charcoal and sponge to negotiate his existence as a “Pan-African Catholic black man with locs”. The vessels, bowls and cups made by Rahming contrast the history of ceramics as utility due to his treatment of the clay post-bisque firing. Bisque firing is used to harden the clay body in preparation for glazing, but Rahming considers this first step the final part of process. He often scratches into the surface with nails and covers the surfaces with sisal and copper. He returns to the land to cultivate limestone




“I Carry Water From The Well”, 2019
Matthew Rahming. Earthenware, Copper And Sisal

and incorporate the stone into clay. More often than not, he loses vessels to the firing process, but it does not discourage him. Rahming is currently pursuing a Bachelor’s of Fine Art at the Montserrat College of Art.

While some young Bahamians like Dyah Neilson, Samantha Treco and Nastassia Pratt are keeping the tradition of landscape painting alive in this contemporary time, young artists of The Bahamas are exploring nuances to Bahamian culture and rendering them in unconventional ways. The legacies of our forefathers and foremothers can be seen in the details of application and concept creating, but this new wave of artistic energy is fresh and of an international standard. It is roaring, bold, courageous and charged with intentions of

defining and redefining how we view ourselves. The artists named are of a pack of lions of this generation pushing forth and keeping the arts and culture scene alive. **UA**







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GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND: STILL ROCKIN'

By Yolanda Hanna

Photographs courtesy of The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism & Aviation

In 2020, the narrative of Grand Bahama Island is filled with faith, hope and the fierce determination of residents eager to reignite the island's economic engines. The beautiful island, renowned for its pristine beaches, ecological habitats and myriad of dining experiences, is steadily rebuilding post-Hurricane Dorian. At the core of the recovery, alongside residents and NGOs, are business owners who have keenly demonstrated a commitment to do their part to rebuild Grand Bahama's economy.

An aggressive marketing campaign was launched at the beginning of the year by the Grand Bahama Island Tourism Board (GBITB) in partnership with the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation (BMOTA), to send a strong message to international tourism markets and the world at large that Grand Bahama is not out of the game—it is open for business. In fact, a few months after the storm, several hotel properties and businesses in multiple sectors were already operational and eager to welcome back familiar faces and embrace new visitors to the island.

When historians document the recovery process of this tranquil 530 square-mile island located just off the coast of Florida, they will undoubtedly note that one of the island's most attractive qualities is the warmth of its people and their amazing resilience in the face of adversity. The dawning of the New Year was ushered in with strong optimism for the road ahead.

At the beginning of 2020, 1,416 hotel rooms were available for booking, which represents 85% of the room inventory that was available prior to Hurricane Dorian. The properties ready for business include Lighthouse Pointe at Grand Lucayan, Pelican Bay Hotel, Bell Channel Inn, Ocean Reef Resort, Castaways Resort, Royal Islander, Sunrise Resort & Suites, Old Bahama Bay Resort, Paradise Cove and Blue Marlin Cove. Prior to reopening, the popular

all-inclusive Viva Wyndham Fortuna Beach Resort embarked on a massive renovation project of more than 50% of its room inventory, which also included the refreshing of its restaurants and bars, spa and amphitheater. A number of vacation rentals and timeshares are also now available for booking. The Taino Beach Resort, Dundee Bay Villas, Mayfield Beach & Tennis Club and Island Seas Resort are all also open for business, and additional hotel properties are scheduled to reopen by mid-year, giving vacationers a wide range of accommodations to choose from.

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A long-standing favorite destination of travelers for many years, the island has always boasted a sumptuous array of restaurants for dining. Foodies have enjoyed menu offerings spanning from native Bahamian to Italian to Latin-fusion with a tropical island twist, and they will be pleased to know that a number of restaurants are back, offering delicious selections to feast on and an atmosphere filled with warm smiles and colorful conversation to highlight their dining experience. These Bahamian-owned restaurants contribute significantly to Grand Bahama's economy, and are a major part of the island's restoration. The flavorful Merport Bistro in Downtown Freeport; succulent seafood dishes at Out Da Sea Bar & Grill and The Stoned Crab; tasty down home delights from Geneva's Place, Mary Ann's, the Wednesday night Fish Fry in Smith's Point, Toads on the Bay in William's Town, Upstairs Restaurant at Bell Channel Inn and Tony Macaroni's Conch Experience; and the fusion flavors found at Sabor Bahamas Restaurant & Bar and Agave are just some of the restaurants that are open for business. A top honor was bestowed upon Grand Bahama restaurant Flying Fish Gastro Bar from the global digital Caribbean culture magazine The Caribbean Journal, which named the restaurant in the top 20 on its "50 Best Caribbean Restaurants 2020" list.

Even more accolades were lavished on local businesses for their quality tourism products, as Carnival Cruise Line (which averages 15 calls a month to Grand Bahama and is the largest provider of cruise ship guests to the island) presented scuba tour agency UNEXSO with the prestigious Caribbean's Leading Tour Operator award, which is given to the company that receives the highest ratings from both their passengers and onboard shore excursion staff for shore excursions conducted the previous season. Award nominations also came from USA Today's 2020 Caribbean Readers Choice Awards as Grand Bahama received four awards in the categories: Best Caribbean Beach (#8 Fortune Beach and #9



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Gold Rock Beach), Best Caribbean Beach Bar (#7 Tony Macaroni's Conch Experience) and Best Caribbean Restaurant (#9 Banana Bay Restaurant & Bar). The recognition sparked glimmers of hope among stakeholders, and it was a reminder to travelers that there are still interesting experiences to enjoy on Grand Bahama Island.

At the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) 2020 Marketplace held at the Baha Mar resort on New Providence in January, representatives from the Grand Bahama Island Tourism Board, Grand Bahama Port Authority, Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation and the Office of the Prime Minister, along with several of the island's stakeholders, used the platform to share updates on the island's recovery and to confirm its readiness to receive visitors. The team further reinforced the restoration message by inviting a select group of tour operators, journalists and other media to the island on a familiarization trip at the close of CHTA 2020 Marketplace. Representatives from Sunwing International, Apple Leisure Group and operators from Portugal and France, along with travel writers from USA Today and Travel Weekly, freelance writers, influencers and bloggers, flew to Grand Bahama and experienced firsthand transportation services, ecological tours, local cuisine and handmade crafts. Accompanied by executives from Grand Bahama Island Tourism Board and Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, the group's trip to the island allowed them to share their experiences directly with the tourism markets they each represented.

In the midst of ongoing work, creative strategies have been formulated to support the return of visitors to the island, and there is evidence of progression. At the beginning of the year, Bahamasair and Silver Airlines offered special promotions on flights from Fort Lauderdale to Freeport; American Airlines resumed services from Miami to Freeport in February; Bahamas Paradise Cruise Line announced a flash sale on sailings to Grand Bahama island as part of its "roaring twenties" promotion in which guests who book a two-night sailing to Grand Bahama through June 30, 2020 will receive 50% off the second guest; and Balearia Caribbean launched "snowbird winter" getaways in January to encourage travel to the island, and it continues to offer day trips and round-trip travel to Freeport.

As travel season kicks into full swing, and The Bahamas continues to experience growth in the tourism sector, Grand Bahama has reclaimed its seat at the tourism table, boldly stating that in the midst of rebuilding and restoring, it still has the time to entertain the world. The door to the island is open; welcome back to Grand Bahama.

For more information on air and sea offers, accommodations, restaurants, tours and activities, visit: www.bahamas.com/freeport or www.grandbahamavacations.com. 



6

1. Hobie Cat Sailing From Lucayan Beach
2. Family Time On Paddle Boards At Taino Beach
3. Dining Al Fresco At The Stoned Crab
4. Grand Bahama Nature Tours, Jeep Safari
5. UNEXSO, Swim With Dolphins
6. Happy Hour On The Beach

BAHAMIAN FASHION ICONS

The genius of Theodore Elyett and Phylicia Ellis



Phylicia Ellis

By Kendea Smith

Phylicia Ellis photographs courtesy of Stanley Babb and Leo Creary

Theodore Elyett photographs courtesy of Stanley Babb, Marcus Owens and Melissa Elencia

Theodore Elyett and Phylicia Ellis are two of the most renowned fashion designers in The Bahamas. Both designers specialize in evening and bridal gowns and have showcased their immense talent to the world.

Recently, *Up and Away* sat down with the two powerhouse designers.



Theodore Elyett



Theodore Elyett Design, Eva Marcille photograph By Stanley Babb

This designer's name is known worldwide. Theodore Elyett, who is also an award-winning broadcast journalist, has managed to carry his designs to the United States, Europe and China within the last 10 years. He developed Miss Teen Bahamas and has had gowns in many Miss Bahamas competitions. His current life was but a dream when he was eight years old at his late mother's sewing factory. When he began to sew professionally at 13, his budding career took off unexpectedly.

"My mother played a pivotal role because I had access to industrial sewing machines at a very young age and I was able to learn the techniques and the importance of constructing a gown properly. Someone from Miss Bahamas saw the pieces that I made, and they hired me to make costumes for the competition," he said. "Miss Bahamas won fourth in international competition and it really just took off from there."

Elyett continuously built his brand. He entered Mission Catwalk—a reality show for fashion designers in the Caribbean—in 2015 and was victorious as the overall winner.

The designer extraordinaire said a lot of his inspiration comes from a visit to the fabric store. However, he is also inspired by culture and the places he has traveled.

"My inspiration can come from experiences like food and landscapes. But when I look at a fabric, it gives me inspiration," Elyett said. "When it comes to parting with a piece, it is very difficult. That's because as an artist, when I finish a gown it's like I'm giving a piece of me away."

Elyett is one of the few Bahamian designers who can say they have dressed celebrities. His portfolio includes Eva Marcille of *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, Porsha Williams of *Real Housewives of Atlanta* and Michelle Williams of *Destiny Child*. Will Smith also hired Elyett to sketch a piece for one of his friends.

Elyett has showcased for the royal family at Buckingham Palace and his work has made it to the pages of publications such as *Us Weekly*, *Essence* and *Vogue Italia*.

"These are career milestones that designers long before me have yet to achieve. The best part about this is that it is still an ongoing journey for me," Elyett said.

The fashion designer said even though he has had great success, it did not come without a healthy dose of hard work.

Theodore Elyett Design, Michelle Williams photograph By Marcus Owens



BAHAMIAN FASHION ICONS: THE GENIUS OF THEODORE ELYETT AND PHYLICIA ELLIS

"I understand that if I don't put in the work to build my brand, it will never grow. And so, I am prepared to put in the work to build my dream and get it to where it needs to be," he said.



Phylicia Ellis Design photograph By Stanley Babb and Leo Creary

While it may seem that she just exploded in the fashion world, 31-year-old Phylicia Ellis has also made a name for herself in a short period of time.

After graduating high school in 2006, Ellis actually wanted to go to school for business management, but was always talented in clothing construction. She graduated Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania, four years later.

However, it was when her sister pushed her into designing and constructing her wedding dress in 2011 that this fashion designer was really "reborn".

Even though she has worked with designers Mandy Coon and Victor de Souza in New York, Ellis quickly developed her own sense of style simply by feeling fabrics.

"My thought process starts by finding fabrics. My inspiration comes from the material itself and then I can successfully sketch an idea," she said in an interview with *Up and Away*. "It doesn't mean that is always the case; there was a time I actually dreamt about a dress, but that is very rare."



Theodore Elyett Design, Vanessa Ponce de Leon Photograph By Theodore Elyett



Phylicia Ellis Design photograph By Stanley Babb and Leo Creary

Ellis is now a very highly sought-after bridal designer who has designed and constructed bridal gowns for 35 Bahamian brides, as well as six international brides.

"Every bride is different, and it is really all about the client. I always try to stay true to what will look great on a client. You can't always say 'this is the trend' and go in that direction because everyone is unique," she explained.

This designer's social media status has grown tremendously.

She has a following of over 37,500 followers on Instagram and continues to get recognition on a number of online bridal pages.



Phylicia Ellis Designs photograph By Stanley Babb and Leo Creary

"I am always modest about the attention, but I guess this is what has to happen for growth. It's a lot. I am trying to build a brand where I don't have to be so hands-on—where I don't construct every gown. In five years, I definitely want my brand to go across the United States in bridal boutiques and as little as that may seem, I feel that would be major," she said.

Ellis hopes to showcase her work in this year's Bridal Week in New York.

She also shared this advice for up-and-coming fashion designers: "Follow the urge because you may have that one person that says, 'No, you can't do that.' I would definitely say follow what you believe. If I didn't do it, I wouldn't be where I am today. Keep pushing and keep elevating." **UA**



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SWEET, SWEET SOCA

MUSIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

By Jossane Kerrice Felix

Photographs courtesy of Maria Nunes | Jossane Felix photograph courtesy of Colin Castillo and Andy Greene

*One of the many beautiful destinations serviced by Bahamasair seasonally,
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Masterfully designed and invented in the twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the indigenous sound of soca music is one of the fundamental ingredients which dominates the carnival scene no matter which country is hosting this epic event. It is by far the most popular genre of music played on the twin islands. Most of the artistes have a fan base which is visibly mesmerized by the soca rhythms.

Primarily conceptualized and invented by the late great Garfield Blackman, also known as Lord Ras Shorty I, this new sound was created in order to preserve the sound of calypso. Calypso is an art form used to tell stories and to draw attention to issues that may be plaguing a society, from crime and politics to stories of infidelity hidden in plain sight. Adept songwriters make excellent use of double entendre to create their calypsoes. There were fears that the calypso art form could die easily due to the pervading sounds of reggae, which was quickly becoming the genre of choice not only throughout the Caribbean but also internationally, and which has been used to create linkages to our Caribbean identity. Ras Shorty I attempted to quell this ideology through his attempts at songwriting, and so, the sweet, sweet sounds of soca could rightfully be linked to him as a native of the twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The base of soca music includes classical Indian musical elements fused with traditional calypso rhythms, which was skillfully designed to impact the two largest ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago—both those of African and those of East Indian descent. Traditional Indian instruments included in this new style of refined calypso were the dholak, tabla and dhantal. This genre was originally called “solka”, a combination of the words soul and calypso. This was a bit misleading as some were led to believe that solka was a combination of American soul music and calypso, which was not true. There is even a bit of history with regard to the spelling of solka, which was spelt “soca” by a music journalist and this is what has transcended throughout the decades. Other sources believe that the latter part of the word originated from the first letter of the Hindi alphabet, “kah”, which signified the beginning of a new musical movement, spelling the word “sokah”. Lord Shorty passed away in the year 2000 and so this cannot be verified.

The first series of attempts to popularize soca on the international stage were made by artistes such as Arrow, known for his international hit “Hot Hot Hot” which was later released by Buster Poindexter. Other easily recognizable hits on the world stage include Kevin Lyttle’s “Turn Me On”; Soca Boys’ “Follow the Leader”; Rupee’s “Tempted to Touch”; and “Doggie”, penned by Anselm Douglas which was later covered by Baha Men as “Who Let the Dogs Out”.





The younger generation of soca artistes have been seeking to place soca on the international stage with “one voice and one mission”, which is to make soca global. Lord Shorty’s offspring, the Blackman Family, has stuck to his legacy. The various members, namely Nailah Blackman, Marge Blackman and other members, have been working feverishly at refining their music to an internationally palatable sound in order to achieve the “one mission” goal. This is a major feat to try to accomplish, but not an insurmountable challenge. Capturing market share by truly captivating the global audience is a feat in which soca artistes and those within the industry have to think, constantly rethink and evolve their ideas to be accepted internationally. Nailah has experienced some measure of success thus far as she has performed as far as Australia and Germany. In 2018, the entire country beamed with excitement as she was nominated for a BET Best New International Act Award.

Machel Montano, a visionary who made his way on the scene with “Too Young To Soca” many moons ago as a very young boy, has taken the world by storm. His name is synonymous with soca. He has performed on global stages as far as Japan, preaching the “gospel according to Machel” about soca to all who would listen. The pulsating rhythms of his popular high-powered soca songs really leave the audience enthralled and with no choice but to wine their waists (gyrate) to the sweet sound. Montano has experienced international acclaim for his hit song penned by Jelani “Pops” Shaw, called “Ministry of Road”. This song afforded Montano the opportunity to cop the Soul Train Award for Best International Performance in 2014. Any production hosted by Montano and his team, namely “Machel Mondays”, has been truly world-class and an unforgettable experience. He has been influential to young and upcoming artistes also, with Aaron Duncan following closely in his footsteps, paving a way for himself in the soca music space. The year 2020 was the last hosting of the Machel Mondays event, however, we look forward to all exciting projects that this giant in the industry has in store for his fans in the coming years.

Erphaan Alves, an artiste who has a true passion for the art form, has made it his mission to take soca to the global level. Currently, the genre struggles to be heard on mainstream international media. There have been very few bars and snippets of soca music in prime time shows, reality TV shows and other media which would really capture an international audience. The exposure is currently too limited compared to other genres and so Alves, along with his cohorts, has been striving to “push the soca global”. Take a listen to his 2020 soca tune “Soca Global”.



In 2018, Olatunji Yearwood was recognized on the world stage as he participated in the world-renowned talent competition “X-Factor” in the United Kingdom, when the panel of celebrity judges were blown away by his performances of his original compositions, most notably “Bodyline”. Bunji Garlin, another high-powered soca artiste, won the Best International Performance Soul Train Award in 2013 with his soca tune “Differentology”, which features ace guitarist Nigel Rojas. This tune was used as the theme song for ABC Network’s primetime show “Grey’s Anatomy” and in the NBC arena in the recent past. During the 2019 Canadian Federal election, the song was in heavy rotation on the campaign trail by the leader of the New Democratic Party, Jagmeet Singh.

It is the case by far, no doubt, that the genre in demand during Carnival is soca music. There is an entire competition called the International Soca Monarch Competition which is dedicated to this genre during Trinidad and Tobago’s carnival. Soca artistes in both the power soca (up-tempo) and groovy soca (slower tempo) categories perform live to massive crowds which are eager to see their favourite artistes perform their tune of the season live and in the flesh. Be sure to attend this event once you are on the island during the competition.



Kes the Band has created “I Come For This Wuk” and “People”, which strike chords within all who take a good listen to the band’s work. The lead singer, Kes, has always been one to have the ladies falling all over themselves at his live performances. “Savannah Grass”, a piece co-written by Kes as well as Jelani “Pops” Shaw, is a power soca piece which transports the listener into a euphoric state. Many audience members have stated that they have been really grabbed by the piece as it puts them in a trance-like state.

Farmer Nappy is known for his wonderful groovy soca hits which leave the ladies crooning in front of the stage during his performance. Hits such as “Hookin Meh” tell stories of contemporary social issues and the dynamics within relationships as the lyrics along with the music video examine and reveal just how both men and women in society may deal with similar types of issues.

Two-time International Soca Monarch, Voice, an artiste who creates truly positive messages for the masses through song, showcases his versatility by mastering his power soca tunes to be able to also compete with the same song in the groovy soca monarch competition by slowing down the number of beats per minute in the song, producing a groovy vibe. Be sure to check out Voice’s “Year for Love”, performed in 2018 in both the groovy and power categories at the International Soca Monarch Competition via YouTube.


Soca when played on the steelpan is a wonderful marriage. Soca not only sounds great on steelpan, but also because the songs are popular and have been playing at fetes, the audience can quickly identify them and sing along when they are fayed on the instrument. The audience eagerly awaits the extended versions of the songs as the song’s length for judging at the National Panorama competition is eight minutes. Bands such as Massy All Stars, Desperadoes and bp Renegades thrill the audience with their arrangements of soca tunes. Steelbands choosing a soca tune for the National Panorama competition has become a trend in recent history, which has been auguring well for the bands, revitalizing the steelband fraternity and its support from the average citizen. “Year for Love” was selected by the bp Renegades Steel Orchestra for the National Panorama Conventional Steel Orchestra category in 2018. The orchestra copped the National Panorama Title that year for their rendition of a Duvone Stewart passionate and spirit-filled arrangement after an unforgettable and world-class performance by the entire steel orchestra.

Desperadoes performed “Different Me” in 2016 with heavily jazzy undertones within their arrangement of this sweet soca tune. This Clive Zanda arrangement led the band to cop the National Panorama title that year. Massy All Stars had a wonderful and doubly sweet rendition of Nadia Batson’s “So Long”, and Caribbean Airlines Skiffle’s rendition of the same tune battled it out at the National Panorama Competition.



Power soca dominates the airwaves during the carnival season with artistes like Machel Montano, Kes the Band, Blax and the All Stars, Patrice Roberts, Nadia Batson, Destra Garcia and Fay Ann Lyons-Alvarez, her sister Terri Lyons and more vying for the Road March Title (power soca rules the road on carnival Monday and Tuesday). Power soca ensures that masqueraders have the energy and stamina they need to display their beautiful costumes while enjoying the “lime”, which is the company of their friends and family with whom they may be playing mas in the same carnival band. The Road March is determined by the number of times the artiste’s song is played at every judging point along the carnival parade route in the cities and boroughs. The song with the most airplay wins.

In recent history, artistes and songwriters have been composing soca tunes to a “riddim”. This occurs when the producers and engineers create beats in the studio and artistes and songwriters compose lyrics to the same riddim. On the radio and internet streaming circuits, one can hear various versions of sweet soca tunes on the same riddim. These songs really drive the carnival fete goers and keep the parties at a high momentum, especially during the live band set changes. I challenge you to listen to the various song iterations on the Skinner Park Riddim, which has been popular this year.

Most soca songs tend to be instructional. The lyrics instruct the audience to “jump and wave”, “misbehave”, “wave a rag or wave a flag” and so the benefits of working out reveal the results of such hard work. Participants’ fitness levels and ability to keep up is critical to their level of enjoyment. Upon your visit to Trinidad and Tobago, especially during the carnival season, be sure to be fully appraised of the entire repertoire of soca offerings available from our soca artistes so that you can sing along and enjoy yourself, whether at fetes or while keeping up with your fitness routine. This will make your visit even sweeter! 



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Imagine making island hopping your new hobby, since it can be satisfied with Bahamasair's destinations: you could visit places that have unique items to offer. One of those interesting destinations is to Havana, Cuba. It's a flight that always transports many passengers that bring back a popular and highly acclaimed souvenir: a box of Cohiba cigars, also known as Habanos.

Cuban cigars are well known for the beauty of the box, the iconic scent, the handcrafted product and the exquisite taste; but what lies beneath the final product? Let me walk you through a process that will help you make a sound decision when purchasing Habanos.

According to Jhusat Hernández Batista, quality technician of cigars export company El Laguito (Cohiba), the secret to the quality of Cuban cigars is the soil found in the country, mainly in Vuelta Abajo (a geographic region in the Pinar del Río Province of Cuba). The area is famous for its beautiful fields of tobacco leaves, and it lies in the extreme western part of the island, bordered on the north by the Sierra de los Órganos mountains. It is one of the five tobacco regions of Cuba where the soil is unique and not found in any other country.

Many experts believe that the Vuelta Abajo valley produces the best cigar tobacco in the world, and that that is where the secret of the flavor and aroma comes from. The mixture of the leaves that give each brand its unique taste, based on the type of cigar and the professional quality of those who make it, determines the outcome that gives Cuban cigars the quality stamp known to all.

Did you know that the time of sowing, harvesting, drying and curing tobacco makes all the difference? That is a magic that only those





who grow the plant know, and of course nobody important thing to determine that aroma and flavor.

When rolling a cigar, several leaves are used—all from the same plant. The leaves have different functions: fillers, binders or wrappers. The mixture of the various parts of the leaf determines the strength of the cigar.

If you are considering acquiring Cuban cigars as a souvenir, here is what expert cigar roller Batista recommends:

- Cohiba Siglo I and Siglo II for in between meetings or theater functions;
- For a business lunch, a good Robusto is all you need;
- However, during a dinner, Espléndidos or Siglo VI will seal the deal.

I sought advice from expert cigar taster Daniel Morejon Romero, who recommends to light up a party with a 56 or 54. I had no clue what those numbers meant, so he added that those numbers are for the Cohiba Behike cigar line, which is currently one of the most expensive Habanos in the world. (In case you want to impress with a gift.)

Cohiba Behike is the Bentley of the most prestigious brands. It carries three sizes: BHK 52, BHK 54 and BHK 56. The production of Behike is extremely limited and exclusive. This prestigious product incorporates the “medio tiempo” tobacco leaf, which offers exceptional character and flavor.

Did you know that “cohiba” was the indigenous Taino word for tobacco, and the person conducting a ritual in which they lit up their cohibas was called the “behike” (priest or medicine man)?

My curiosity on the subject led me to another expert cigar taster, Orquidia González. I asked her about the sensation experienced after her tasting routine. She said it is like transporting yourself to heaven; it's having the assurance that relaxation, accompanied with the aroma of peace, was guaranteed after each smoke.

When choosing a cigar, consider that each cigar brand has different strengths. For example, the Partagás line is strong, Cohiba is a medium to strong Habano and Romeo y Julieta is medium to mild. The Cohiba line is also different from the others because its leaves age for five years; however, other brands age their leaves for two or three years. But all cigars are best kept in a humidor.

Are you ready for a cigar tour? [UA](#)



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TURKS AND CAICOS

OFF THE BEATEN PATH



NEPTUNE VILLAS AND LAS BRISAS RESTAURANT

By David Newlands

Photographs courtesy of David Newlands

One of the many beautiful destinations serviced by Bahamasair, visit Bahamasair.com to book your travel to the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Upon flying into Providenciales, visitors to Turks and Caicos have the privilege of taking in one of the most beautiful views. Rather than a sudden shift from the deep blue sea to an island, visitors are gifted with a natural mosaic consisting of shades of blue, beige and white. This is Chalk Sound National Park, located on the southernmost tip of Providenciales—a large sound that is covered with tiny cays.

As airlines fly over this prime example of natural beauty, visitors and residents alike get to witness why Turks and Caicos' slogan is "Beautiful by Nature". To the naked eye, this national park is a pristine oasis with only a few homes on the surrounding hills. I, however, am here to inform you that you actually can visit and even stay there during your vacation in a small villa complex that allows for short-term rentals, called Neptune Villas.





To find this location is an adventure in and of itself, as visitors must travel in the opposite direction of most traffic—heading towards South Dock instead of Grace Bay. It is approximately a 10-minute drive, bringing visitors through an industrial area, but in the end it will be worth it. Visitors will find themselves in the Chalk Sound Settlement, where Neptune Villas is located. Chalk Sound is primarily a residential area, and is home to not only the national park, but also to the beautiful Sapodilla Bay. With a short drive into the settlement, visitors will see the distinct entrance of Neptune Villas, which has an ornate gate flanked by two statuettes of the Roman god of the sea. Separated by a small bridge, the complex is directly off of the main road, offering a definitive sense of privacy and seclusion for its guests.

Originally constructed as a small community of cottage-styled homes, the community housed many residents and long-stay visitors. However, it has come under new ownership and was recently converted into a short-term rental community. Today, the cottage-styled homes have been renovated into luxury villas where guests are offered the comforts of a house, including a full kitchen, living room, private balconies and breathtaking views. Most visitors will probably not spend a great deal of time in their villa, however, as this vacation getaway offers a variety of activities to keep visitors entertained and enamored with the beauty of the national park.

Neptune Villas offers a variety of activities for guests, ranging from boat tours around the beautiful cays that dot the Sound, to kayak and canoe rentals for the more adventurous explorers. They also offer snorkeling expeditions and are located very close to Sapodilla Bay beach where watersports enthusiasts can jet ski and wakeboard through various agencies. For those who seek a more relaxing stay, the complex also boasts a beautiful pool where families can lounge and play in complete comfort and luxury.

If the location, seclusion and amenities weren't enough to convince you, Neptune Villas also has amazing dining options for its guests. Las Brisas Restaurant and Sushi on the Sound are two restaurants owned by the villas that complement the surrounding beauty with delicious food. Resting directly on the shores of Chalk Sound, these luxury restaurants offer guests the comforts of a five-star restaurant along with unbelievable views.

The Mediterranean ambiance of Las Brisas Restaurant sets it apart from many other restaurants on the island. It boasts a white marble deck that extends from the poolside bar to the open-faced kitchen which sits directly across, allowing guests and residents to smell the delicious aromas of fresh cuisine being cooked. Beyond the poolside bar is a covered dining area, where families and couples can share dinner in an intimate setting; and for those seeking to impress, they also offer a beachside gazebo that allows dining guests to look out at the mosaic of Chalk Sound while they enjoy their meals.

Las Brisas Restaurant's menu focuses primarily on Mediterranean dishes, including tapas (both traditional

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and modern versions) and iconic dishes such as Azorean stuffed chicken, seafood paella and langostino. For guests who aren't craving Mediterranean cuisine, they also offer delicious entrees such as lobster thermidor, seared tuna steak, beef Wellington and racks of lamb—along with local fish and classic dining fare. These dishes can also come with an array of local sides such as yucca chips, fried green plantains and sweet grilled plantain, for those who seek a more Caribbean-centric dining experience.

If a sit-down meal is too conventional, Neptune Villas also offers Sushi on the Sound, a new restaurant that puts a unique island twist on the traditional Japanese dish, offering a diverse selection of rolls in both traditional styles and unique fusion styles. Nestled in a covered-gazebo mere feet away from the shore,

this open-air dining experience allows guests to enjoy the natural ambience as they dine, as opposed to the crowded, tight quarters of more conventional sushi venues.

Neptune Villas is the perfect destination for first-time visitors as well as returning guests, and is ideal for families and couples. If you seek an intimate, one-of-a-kind experience of the Turks and Caicos, away from the crowds and chaos, this quiet, beautiful venue is an excellent choice. If you are interested in further information on the villas, or the restaurants, you can visit the Neptune Villas website at www.NeptuneVillastci.com. With idyllic scenery, excellent amenities and amazing food, Neptune Villas is one of the best vacation locations in the Turks and Caicos. [UA](#)

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LaShonda Clarke

ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY

By LaShonda Clarke

Photograph courtesy of Lyford Cay Foundations

As a child, LaShonda Clarke's grandfather would take her on Sunday drives by the airport to watch planes fly overhead. Little did he know that these weekend excursions would instill in his granddaughter a lifelong fascination with the mechanics of these gravity-defying machines, leading her to shatter the glass ceiling of Bahamians in the field of aviation mechanics.

But it wasn't easy for this graduate of Doris Johnson Senior High to break into this male-dominated field. Without the funds to pursue her passion in formal studies, Clarke instead entered the Royal Bahamas Defence Force in the Supplies Department, adjusting uniforms and procuring supplies. It would take five years for her to request—and receive approval for—a job change, shifting into the Air Wing Department to begin her career in aviation mechanics.

"Everyone looked confused when I first picked up a tool," she said. "The only other women they had seen there before were the secretary and a stewardess, not the 'getting greasy' type."

Learning on the job, Clarke then took out a loan and used her vacation time to earn her airframe and powerplant license at Jacksonville State College in Florida, USA, becoming one of the first in her cohort of field-trained male peers to secure this foundational certification, and the first woman in the military to earn this distinction.

"On the job, it validated what I was doing—to be equal in the eyes of the men I worked with," she said. "I always wanted to get a degree, because I knew it would open up opportunities, and this was the first step."

From there, Clarke was able to apply for—and receive—a technical training and vocational scholarship from Lyford Cay Foundations in 2016 to complete her associate's degree in aviation maintenance management at St. Petersburg College in Florida. She transferred to Lewis University in Illinois to build upon this achievement with a bachelor's degree in the field, and then became a two-time Lyford Cay Foundations Scholar when she received a graduate scholarship in 2018 to complete her Master of Science in aviation and transportation at the institution.

Having completed the capstone for her studies, Clarke plans to train for another year in the field and then return home to explore options for improving access to educational programs in aviation maintenance. She hopes to provide the support that she lacked so that eventually Bahamians interested in this career path won't need to travel abroad for necessary certifications.

"I'd like to thank the Lyford Cay Foundations because if they didn't give me that hand up, I wouldn't have gotten here," she said. "They listened to my story and I'm glad they saw potential and persistence in me. So, if I can make it easier for someone else to start or achieve their career, I'd like to do it." **UA**

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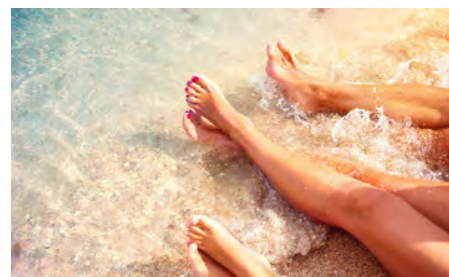
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PERFORMING ARTISTS WENDI & DYSON KNIGHT

By Caprice Spencer-Dames
Photographs courtesy of Wendi and Dyson Knight

For this January-March 2021 issue of *Up and Away*, Caprice Spencer-Dames caught up with the Bahamian Knight duo—Wendi and Dyson—for an in-depth conversation about balancing family life, entertaining, recording, touring and socializing.

Sit back, relax and enjoy her conversation with both of them.

Ladies first—Wendi, tell us a little bit about you. Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Nassau, Bahamas, but raised on the Family Islands of Cat Cay, Bimini, Eleuthera and Andros until my family moved back to Nassau when I was 12.

When did you begin singing or when did you find your voice?

My father was the one who discovered my talent for singing. I had my first professional engagement at four years old when I sang “The Greatest Love of All” at my preschool graduation. I found my current voice while in university at Berklee College of Music studying music business and voice.

As an entertainer you are dynamic on stage, but you seem somewhat quiet and reserved off stage. Do you transform into an alter ego on stage?

I wouldn’t really call her an alter ego, but my on stage persona is definitely more in-your-face than my day-to-day “booky” self. In normal life, I wear glasses, I run my family’s business, I take care of my daughter and I wear my natural hair. On stage, WENDI is fearless, demanding and sexy.



You have been known for a variety of musical styles, from rake-n-scrape to soca and a few in between. What musical style hits to the core of Wendi?

I am a pop/R&B girl through and through. That is truly where my vocal is most comfortable. I've been thriving in the soca and Caribbean music genre lately and that has been really exciting to explore.

The entertainment business is unforgiving, especially when you have to balance family life, work life, on stage life and just everyday life. How do you keep everything balanced and stay centered with a young baby, Zenndarah, and your "big baby", Dyson?

(Laugh)! My big baby Dyson! Well, I am still trying to figure out balance. Some days I have it, and some days I don't. Some days I get lots of work done, and some days I accomplish absolutely nothing. Both my husband and I are very busy, and our sweet Zenndarah is growing fast and is super demanding, so sometimes we drop everything and just cater to being new parents.

Do you love everything that's been happening with your music, your awards, your new projects and your future plans?

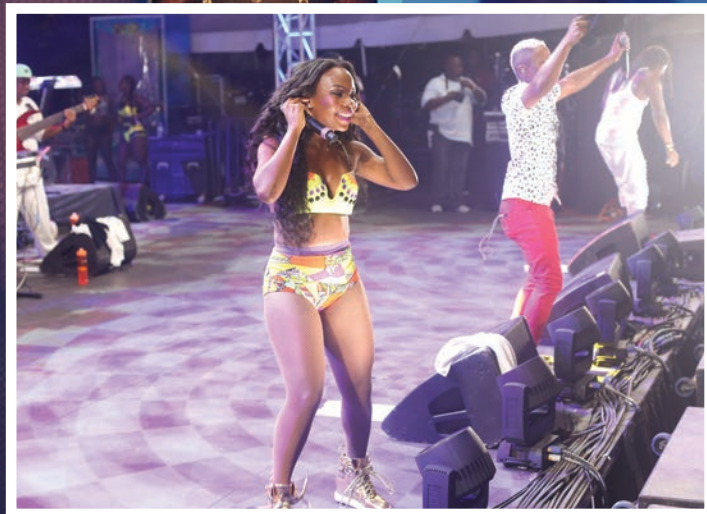
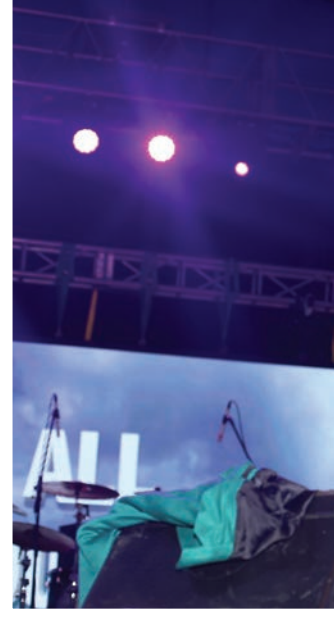
It feels really good to be seen, heard and acknowledged by way of awards as well as being invited on various projects. I do wish that I had more capital to pursue my future plans but I always say, "They will have to catch this train whilst it's moving!"

Let me get personal and dig into some of the "shop talk"—what is it like being married to a working musician/entertainer? Is it easier because you are both in the industry or is there strong competition in the household?

It is definitely advantageous to share life with someone who understands, and is a part of the same industry. There isn't much competition. We are partners in all things: music, events, live shows, arrangements, party events, almost everything that surrounds the entertainment industry are collaborative decisions.

If you could invite three people to your table—living or dead—for dinner, for some great food and for stimulating conversation with you, Zenndarah and Dyson, who would they be?

Jesus, Whitney Houston and the inventor of "Little Baby Bum"... The last one would be for Zenndarah.





DYSON KNIGHT

Where do I start with you, Dyson? If I was to guess, you came out of the womb singing?

I'm pretty sure I did (laugh)! I'm the first child for both parents and my dad always tells me the story of how he prayed a special deal with God. The deal was if he passed his eighth-degree music test, God would bless him with a boy. He passed and God kept his end of the deal. So, I'm the product of a music exam. (Laugh)!

Were you born and raised in a musical family?

Yes, my dad was a member of the Royal Bahamas Police Force Marching Band and his father started the very first Pentecostal marching band. Every child of my grandfather plays an instrument.

How has your upbringing influenced you over the years with some of the choices you have made in your musical journey?

I think about my grandfather often when I think about why I'm so attracted to the stage. He was a reverend and although not the flashy type, he really knew how to command an audience. He was always the loudest voice during song service and no one could out dance him when he started his gospel rocking, foot-stomping, two-step shuffle. I see a lot of him in me. I'm bold and not one bit concerned as to who's watching when I'm in-tune with my music. The confidence it takes to do what I do definitely comes from him.

You have had some high points in your career; can you share a few of them with us?

I've done a lot for an island boy [like] performed on the Today Show in New York; the Kelly and Ryan show; performed in China, Los Angeles, Germany, Mexico, Atlanta, to name a few. I've won the Bahamian Icon Award and the Elevation Award. I'm respected by all of the radio stations in the country and have pretty much become a household name. It took a lot of work to get here, but the fact that I'm still relevant almost 20 years later is the highest point.

Was there ever a low moment in your career that you learnt so much from, but that you hope will never be repeated?

The industry is brutal. Even with all that I've accomplished, I still don't feel successful if I can be honest. I am grateful because I know that I am able to support my lifestyle through music alone. However, this fight to establish a profitable entertainment industry on the island is my low moment. It is a mammoth task that I have to face daily and every day I learn something or experience something that I hope I never have to go through again.

We got personal with Wendi and you know we couldn't leave you out to dig into some of the "shop talk". What is it like being married to a working musician/entertainer? Is it easier because you are both in the industry or is there strong competition in the household?

There is strong competition and it's a lot less easy now that we have our baby. It's hard to balance because it's anti-productive to take Zenn to the studio, gig, video shoot or radio promo. One of us has to focus on her if we can't find a sitter and I'm the type of person that can only do one thing at a time. I'd say that for the past year and a half I've really had to put my work aside to be more supportive to Wendi's. This makes me feel unproductive and I get a bit jealous that she's moving and I'm not but the challenges and exertion of being a mom is something most men don't understand. I've decided that Wendi, rejuvenated by accomplishing her goals makes her stronger emotionally when it comes to mothering our daughter and when it comes to being a wife as well. It's all worth it.

What musical style that you perform hits deep into your soul and why?

ALL styles hit deep for me. I am a lover of creativity. When I listen to music, I hear the emotions in the track. Doesn't matter if I don't know the artist or the language they're singing. Any song that is well put together will move me.

If you could invite three people to your table—living or dead—for dinner, for some great food and for stimulating conversation with you, Zennarah and Wendi, who would they be?

Jay-Z, Michael Jackson and a native Arawak Indian that lived and died before Christopher Columbus. **UA**

Catch Wendi on social media: @wendi242 via YouTube, Instagram and Facebook.

Catch Dyson on social media: @dysonknight via YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and @dysontheartist via Facebook.

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Exploring western Grand Bahama one bite at a time. For many, Grand Bahama is a peaceful island oasis that starts and stops with the charming boutique hotels, polished restaurants and traditional tourist activities that are readily offered in the Lucaya area. But heading west, down the length of Queen's Highway and past the Freeport city center, is Eight Mile Rock, one of the island's oldest communities.

A Sip, Snack And Taste Of The West

By Nikia Wells | Photographs courtesy of Nikia Wells and Carmel Churchill



Scarlet Plums

Flip Flops Panny Cakes

Growing up in “The Rocks” meant starting the day with a cup of tea and homemade “panny cakes” before spending a carefree afternoon playing barefoot in the yard with friends and climbing (and falling out of) the tallest trees in a misguided bid to reach the sweetest mangoes, sugar apples and scarlet plums. Sometimes there would be the quick errand or two—perhaps a trip into Sea Grape for a loaf of bread, fresh and still warm from the oven, or a dash into Pine Dale to grab lunch from a neighbor who sold full meals out of her kitchen. Along the way, familiar faces would wave and ask about the family and catch up about school or life in general.

Times have changed in this settlement, but its warmth and hospitality are still fully intact. Residents still know each other by name. Children still play outside, shooting marbles and tossing basketballs through makeshift hoops. And food still holds an important role in uniting the area while also providing a ateway into the community. For a truly immersive western Grand Bahama experience, it is recommended that travellers come with an open mind, an empty stomach and a willingness to sip, snack and taste their way from Bartlett Hill all the way down to West End.

The “main road” that travels through the Eight Mile Rock community is lined with residential homes and an unfiltered look at traditional island living. There are also several small hole-in-the-wall restaurants that have been serving up Bahamian food for years. Favorites like N&A & Lucky’s are well known for their juicy “chicken in the bag” (fried chicken and French fries covered in ketchup and hot sauce, and then served in aluminum foil and a brown paper bag), while Praise The Lord has been dishing up hearty plates of chicken, peas and rice, macaroni and cheese, coleslaw and more for decades. It is also not uncommon to see school children walking along the road with small bags filled with hard salami doused in hot sauce, simply called “salty”, and other local treats. Many



residents are often more than happy to point out food spots that cannot be found in any guide or map.

Taking a detour onto the “sea road” leads to the sweet seagrape-dotted oceanfront of Lover’s Beach. Heading just past the 1800s-built St. Stephen’s Anglican Church, and the Boiling Hole, which is rumored to have mermaids and other mythical beings swimming just below its surface, is the colorful wooden deck of the appropriately named Flip Flops Restaurant. This oceanside spot is perfect for a late afternoon meal or the start of a long evening. While enjoying the cool crispness of the ocean spray mist, an ice-cold gully wash (made with fresh coconut water, sweet condensed milk and a generous dose of gin) or a heaping plate of creamy grits loaded with flavor-packed conch, ham



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60

A SIP, SNACK AND TASTE OF THE WEST



Fish Fry



Shabo's Pickled Conch Salad

and salt beef, be sure to chat with those around you. The owner, like most of the men and women manning the grills and bars in the area, lives just a few minutes away. The storefronts aren't simply a means to make money for them—they are an extension of their community and culture. They take immense pride in their food because it is a part of who they are, and if visitors have a moment, they will usually gladly share a bit more about life in "the west".

As the sun sinks into the calm turquoise ocean, the vibrant cluster of stalls known as Sunset Village begins to open. Every Thursday to Sunday, the area bustles with energy as the sweet aromas of fire-grilled seafood and herb-filled pots waft through the air. The quiet seaside town comes alive with the sounds of Bahamian rake-n-scrape music, and people from around the island come together for a good time.

As the gully wash transitions to a round of ice-cold Sands beer, the conversation undoubtedly begins flowing freely. Strangers often become friends in the span of a single evening, and the night can quickly slip away. But, before turning in, it is highly recommended to head a bit farther, past the charming homes and neatly manicured yards of Holmes Rock, and into West End. As the name suggests, it is the most western tip of the island, and in the daytime its oceanfront is dotted with fishing boats offering fresh-caught seafood and small stalls selling juicy conch salad. But once night falls, the parties kick off and can last until a few hours before sunrise.

West End has many food stalls that are worth visiting. Making a choice may be difficult, but there is one that stands out for its unique conch salad. The bright red, pickled blend originated by the Shabo Conch Salad stand is perhaps the most distinctive conch salad blend found in The Bahamas, and has yet to be seen on any other island. The fiery recipe is a well-kept secret of different pickling spices, mixed together with the traditional conch salad fixin's. Just a few months ago, Shabo's was washed away in the devastating Hurricane Dorian, but the owners quickly rebuilt with the support of their neighbors.

If you are looking for a peaceful slice of island life, a true sense of community and a bit of a delicious adventure, western Grand Bahama has you covered. **UA**

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OFF THE BEATEN PATH

THE BUCCANEER CLUB

Eleuthera, The Bahamas

By Yasmin Johnson | Photographs courtesy of The Buccaneer Club

Eleuthera—an untouched paradise whose name means “land of the free”—quintessentially encapsulates the meaning of “off the beaten path”. Pink sand beaches, waters of deep blue meeting crystallized turquoise and home to the sweetest pineapples and the friendliest people. A little further down this path, nestled away in the center of the island, you will find The Buccaneer Club. Affectionately referred to as “Buccaneer’s” or “The Bucc’”, this family-owned hidden gem is the local hub for islanders, winter residents and tourists alike.

The now-restaurant and bar was originally outfitted to be rentable office spaces. However, two days before Christmas in 1995, The Buccaneer Club officially opened its doors. Serving lunch and dinner, the menu encompassed a little bit of everything, including delicious island curries and seafood dishes. Over the years, The Bucc’ has become an island staple, and now serves breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Set under a massive, beautiful Albizia lebbeck tree, with a large outdoor patio that welcomes warm Bahama breezes, this tropical oasis is splashed with island colors, local art-filled walls, exotic Bahamian décor and beautiful, freshly picked plants—giving you an island-chic atmosphere. There is no shortage of character here, as guests are often greeted by friendly passerby kittens or even roosters. The intimacy of being family-run is an extra touch, as The Bucc’ gives guests an





escape from the hustle and bustle and uniformity of corporate resorts and food chains, and welcomes you to the simplicity of island life—one where the people want to know your name!

Serving up very eclectic fare, The Buccaneer's menu is a fusion of Bahamian, Jamaican, Chinese and American cuisines. The dishes range from traditional Bahamian meals such as stew fish and conch fritters, to American favorites—with an island twist—including Kalik (local Bahamian beer) battered onion rings or the classic Bucc' burger. Their Jamaican-Chinese island curries are also a must-have!

Homemade hot sauces and desserts; delicious island cocktails; fresh seafood delivered right to the backdoor by local fisherman and prepared especially for you; live music and island-style partying on the deck; mom-and-pop hospitality...at The Bucc', you can have it all and get an experience that you will never forget.

We invite you to travel off the beaten path to Eleuthera—you won't be able to get much closer to heaven. Then find your way to The Bucc', and you won't be able to get much closer to island life. We can't wait to share this unique experience with you! [UA](#)





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VISUAL ARTIST

MATTHEW WILDGOOSE

By Yolanda Hanna

Photographs courtesy of Alfred Anderson and Matthew Wildgoose

For this January-March 2021 issue of *Up and Away* where we wanted to highlight the island of Grand Bahama, we were fortunate to have two Grand Bahamians as part of our visual artist interview. Our contributor Yolanda Hanna was ecstatic to sit down and have an intimate conversation with one of her favorite Grand Bahamians, Matthew Wildgoose. A humble, talented and funny individual with a great sense of humor, he enjoyed sitting down with Hanna as well.

Please sit back, relax and enjoy their conversation.

On which island in The Bahamas were you born and raised?

I was born on Grand Bahama and raised in the small rural settlement of Holmes Rock in West Grand Bahama. Holmes Rock is a close-knit community near the shoreline, known for a popular cave that produces fresh water at low tide and saltwater at high tide. The residents were expressive and colorful, everybody



april 2021

66



knew each other. I lived there until I was 21. Life was simple and peaceful; it was the perfect island atmosphere for a creative, curious child to explore.

When did you KNOW you were a bona fide artist?

I knew when I was 13 years old. When I went to school, I'd sit in class every day and sketch in my notebooks. I spent more time drawing than writing notes. One day, I sketched a motorcycle from a magazine and my drawing looked exactly like the picture. That's when I knew I had a gift and I began thinking I really could pursue art professionally.

You have a specific style of painting that brings life to your artwork. Which one of your paintings has made you stand back and say "WOW"?

My portrait of Ronnie Butler made me stand back and say "wow". I loved Ronnie's music and I wanted to capture his humorous, bold personality in my aesthetic. I also painted a portrait of the late singer Blind Blake on a beautiful red cloth canvas. The painting is inspired by his song "Run Come See Jerusalem", which tells the story about the devastating hurricane of 1929. It's a powerful song about our history. When I looked at that red canvas, I immediately thought of him and I vowed to immortalize his image on that background. I'm "wowed" by that painting every time I look at it.

Your portrait of the late Ronnie Butler, legendary entertainer and the godfather of Bahamian music, is one of your most recognizable pieces. What inspired that painting?

My paintings are inspired by people who influence culture. Ronnie Butler was the godfather of Bahamian music. He is an icon and his artistry is inspirational.

Ronnie was a rich storyteller; his stories were framed with subtle innuendos that are hilarious. He was a genius. I listened to his music intently and researched his life before I began that portrait. His song "Water The Garden" is one of my favorites. In the painting, Ronnie is wearing his signature sunglasses, and if you look closely you can see a woman's reflection inside his lenses. That's the woman he sings about in the song. When I showed him the painting, he



autographed [it] and laughed. He laughed hard and he said, "Boy, ya really jack me right up! But I could tell ya, dats me."

What do you want people who view your art to take away? What emotion do you want to invoke?

Well, [that] depends on which piece they're looking at. Overall, I want people to be pleased by the aesthetics of my paintings. I try to be technically sound with proportions and colors, and that goes back to my formal training from the College of The Bahamas, studying art and observing the work of other artists. I want people to be mesmerized by my creativity. I want them to see God, or at least get a glimpse of who God is through my art and become introspective. That may sound obnoxious, but God is the ultimate artist—I'm just a vessel, an island boy who decided to be obedient with the gift that He has given me. So, with a little piece of God inside my mind, transcending through my eyes and my hands onto a canvas, I create art. My desire is for people to understand that they can do what I've done by tapping into their gifts and my hope is they know God a little better when they look at my work.


When you look around the local art scene, who are some of the artists you admire and why?

What a tough question! I get a lot of inspiration from home. I really admire Kishan Munroe and Allan Wallace. Kishan's work inspires me to do more, he inspires me to be better at what I do. He's a brilliant artist and [one] who creates good work. I admire Allan Wallace. Allan is also a brilliant artist; his work is technically sound, and his creative process is out of this world, he creates everything in his head! I'm also impressed by his humility. Remaining very humble is important to me and Allan has maintained his humility. I admire Brent Malone. He's a giant of an artist and his work is amazing. I like how he creates. Brent is a storyteller, and I admire people who tell our stories.

Stimulating conversation can be had around the dinner table, and to that end if you could invite a few people for dinner, living or dead, who would they be and why?

I'd invite Bob Marley and Ronnie Butler to dinner. Bob Marley because he wasn't impressed by the world and its systems. He created his own path, while simultaneously giving the world what it wanted, which was good music. I respect Bob Marley for that—he was a trailblazer. Bob was a vegetarian and I eat meat, so I'd have to serve fish and/or vegetables for dinner. I believe we'd have a great conversation. I would invite Ronnie Butler because I'd want to discuss his music and learn about his creative process over peas soup and dumpling! Peas soup and dumpling is one of my favorite dishes and Ronnie knew how to cook it. So, we would cook soup while we listened to his music, and I would pick his brain and find out the backstory behind some of his most popular songs. **UA**



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