

FEB / MARCH / APRIL • 2016  
vol. 2 issue 3 • www.viequesinsider.com  
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787.435.3172

# VIEQUES insider

CONNECTING VISITORS TO VIEQUES

**THE  
HOTTEST  
DESTINATION**  
FOR THE  
COOLEST  
WEDDINGS



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The curves and ovals of the reception area intuitively lead guests to the bar, which faces the beach across the street and flows into the lively open-air restaurant.

**Travel + Leisure**

#### **BREAKFAST**

horas 8am - 11am

#### **LUNCH**

horas 11am - 3pm

#### **DINNER**

horas 6pm - 10pm

(más o menos)

Restaurant Reservations:

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#### **ROOFTOP SUNSET COCKTAILS**

horas 4pm - 6pm

Sweeping views of the coast  
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#### **BAR SNACKS**

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#### **BAR COCKTAIL MENU**

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# Next Course

CUISINE INSPIRED BY TRAVEL

# Island ambience Amazing food



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### sample menu

Wasabi dusted fried Spanish octopus, Toragashi spiced fingerling potatoes, toasted sesame aioli

House dry aged beef Carpaccio, mixed greens, pickled red onion, capers, grain mustard Caesar, Parmigiano Reggiano

Pan seared catch of the day, herb whip potato, caramelized onion and spinach puree, grape tomato salad

Dry aged beef cut of the day, twice baked potato croquets, tomato confit, herb butter

Double cut bone in pork chop. 3 days in a brine, 3 hours on the smoker, grilled to perfection, butternut squash puree, pancetta roasted brussel sprouts, maple Dijon glaze.

Butter poached Caribbean lobster, white truffle scented crab risotto, prosciutto bound asparagus, caramelized fennel cream.

Dark Chocolate, pretzel crusted cheesecake with toasted Marshmallow merengue



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# SIDDHIA FINE ART HUTCHINSON GALLERY

Vieques' preeminent fine art gallery highlighting Caribbean inspired artwork including original paintings, sculpture, ceramics, photographs, prints, and jewelry.



Christine Treibert – *Sonadora Seed Pods*



Siddhia Hutchinson – *Taino*



Glen Wielgus – *Crash Boats*



Bernardo Medina – *Cafetin*

## Exhibition Openings:

Thursday, February 18, 2016, 6PM-8PM – **Christine Treibert**

"Fallen Flora, Vieques" - Mixed media works inspired by the island

Thursday, March 10, 2016, 6PM-8PM - **12 X 12**

Annual benefit auction supporting the Vieques Humane Society & Animal Rescue

SIDDHIA HUTCHINSON FINE ART GALLERY at the historic Hotel Carmen, Main Street Isabel II, Vieques, Puerto Rico

Monday - Saturday: 10am - 4pm, Sunday 11am - 3pm 787-741-1343 [siddhiahutchinsongallery.com](http://siddhiahutchinsongallery.com)

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My book is in English and Spanish!

100% of the proceeds from the sale of the book go to the Vieques Humane Society and Animal Rescue. Give the gift of love by gifting this book to a child you know and help the animals of Vieques.

## Buy the Book!

*Help the animals of Vieques.*

Miss Fuzzi is a true story set in Vieques about a dog who was rescued and found happiness. Through the book Miss Fuzzi has become a symbol of hope for the animals of Vieques and cherished by all on the island.



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TRADEWINDS GIFT SHOP

VIEQUES GIFTS

THE EMPORIUM

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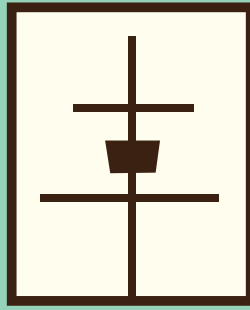
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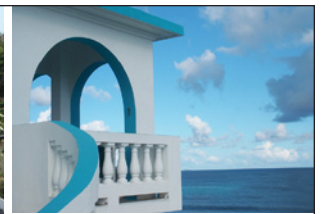
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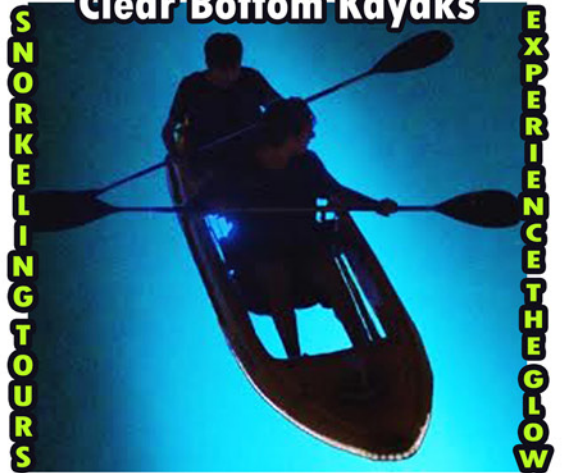


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# Island Real Estate

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**Villa Campo Alto** Elegant home perfect for family living, entertaining and a popular vacation rental. Views of the ocean from pool with a wraparound deck and covered outdoor dining area. 3 queen bedrooms & 4 bathrooms (2 en suite!), open concept kitchen w/ stainless steel appliances, large dining room, adjacent entertaining area, and ample living room w/ a sleeping alcove. Secure 2 car garage with a former caretaker's apartment now storage. Beautifully furnished. **Titled & move in ready. \$575,000**



**Private Hilltop Retreat with income apartment.** 4 Bedroom, 3 bath villa, w/ 1 bedroom, 1 bath apartment. Laundry, pantry, closets, office/bonus room, AC, hurricane shutters, cistern. Modern kitchen with SS appliances.

Pool, spacious outdoor dining and entertainment areas w/ mature landscaping. Electric gate, 2 cisterns. Furnished 1 bedroom apartment has good rental history, a porch and private entrance to the pool. Shared laundry room/storage space w/ extra refrigerator. Tastefully furnished, move in ready. Private location close to Isabel and North beaches, on a titled half acre. Sold furnished. **Great buy at \$545,000**



**Great Views, Great Price, Great Property!** This 2 or 3 bedroom, 2 bath original PRAA house recently extensively rebuilt & remodeled. Buy now and finish it to your taste. New tile, new kitchen, electrical & plumbing,

even new roof. Incredible 2 sided views from 2 outside living spaces. 1,472 square meter lot. Room for a pool. Garage & off road parking. Quiet neighborhood, low taxes. **Great price at \$317,000. Titled.**



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large balcony w/ views of the Caribbean. Master bedroom w/ access to the balcony. Small 2nd bedroom or study. Downstairs is a comfortable remodeled 3 bedroom unit with an open floor plan kitchen/living area, modern bathroom, balcony and lanai. Separate two car garage w/ laundry & storage. Great lot with mature trees & plenty of room for a pool. Furnished & move in ready. **Titled. \$362,500**



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## FERRY SCHEDULE

### Fajardo to Vieques

4:00 am (only Mon-Fri)  
9:00 am  
1:00 pm  
4:45 pm  
8:15 pm

### Vieques to Fajardo

6:00 am  
6:30 am (only Fri, Sat & Sun)  
11:00 am  
3:00 pm  
6:30 pm

Schedule subject to change. Non-residents can be bumped if ferry is full.

## SAFETY TIPS

Many visitors think that Vieques is a sleepy, laid back island where you can lay in your hammock on the beach without a care in the world. For the most part, this is true. But petty theft is everywhere and your vacation can end badly without some precaution and common sense. Follow some safety tips and always be aware of your surroundings and belongings.

**ALWAYS** lock the doors where you are staying. Period. First floor, second floor, every door.

**DON'T** leave a cell phone or iPad charging next to an open window. Never leave house keys next to a window.

**DON'T** take valuables to the beach.

**NEVER** leave valuables unattended.

**DON'T** lock your car at the beach. Leave it open with nothing in it.

**USE COMMON SENSE** when walking around at night. Never walk on the beaches alone after dark.



## DRIVING SAFETY ON FWS REFUGE

The speed limit on the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge is 5-25 MPH depending on location so please pay attention to the signs.

Failure to do so could result in a fine. Speeding creates washboard bumps on the gravel roads, which lead to more accidents and limits road travel for locals who do not drive large trucks or rental SUVs. Hikers, joggers, cyclists, horseback riders, wildlife and many others use the roads. Please slow down when passing on a road and be considerate of others.

**Also note that the closing time of the FWS gate is 6:30 pm (October 1st to March 31st).**

*Enjoy the beauty and peacefulness of Vieques.*

## WHERE TO RECYCLE

### WEST END RECYCLING OFFICE

Follow 200 going West. After you pass the pier take your second left before the large field across from Milivy Church. (If you get to the church you have gone too far.) / Drive 0.25 miles and look for signs for the recycling office on the left.

### ESPERANZA

Located at the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust it is across from the Malecon and next to Duffy's Restaurant. The recycling containers are in front yard.

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# [VIEQUES] insider

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## VIEQUES "WE DO"

Love, romance, passion. They are what make life, well...interesting. Typically they swirl around human relationships, eventually leading two people to that moment of public declaration – I do. It's fitting that this issue's feature is dedicated to WEDDINGS, turning the spotlight on our island's ability to be, excuse the pun, the icing on the cake.

But love, romance and passion are boundless and without definition. Here, all of these things manifest themselves in many ways. Just ask the people. As Keeper of the Bio Bay Mark Martin Bras can tell you, it is possible to fall in love with a *place*. As the countless people working tirelessly for all of the creatures on Vieques will tell you, it is possible to love an *animal*. And the people working so hard for the non-profit organizations of the island will show you, it is possible to fall in love with a *cause*. If you are visiting and find yourself being swept off your feet by Vieques, it is no surprise. *La Isla Nena* can seduce you. Most likely this will not be a passing fling.

The people who work to bring you this magazine have fallen in love with Vieques and are married to the mission of sharing her stories with you. And we can tell you, it is possible to love your *work*. We know that we can do more together than alone and we need you, the visitor, to partner with us. We urge you while you are here to do what you can to gain a deeper understanding of Vieques' culture and life. Visit the Biobay and the Vieques Conservation & Historical Trust, go to the Fort, and attend the fun events planned by the non-profits. It all exists to help welcome and embrace you, a loving gesture from people who love Vieques and have pledged to, in one way or another, nurture, care and protect her. Join us!

Kelly Thompson

# 787.435.3172

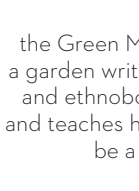
WWW.VIEQUESINSIDER.COM

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## CONTRIBUTORS



**Elliott Anderson** Elliott has been a photographer and photoshop specialist since 2006. He and his wife moved to Vieques in 2012 and started their studio here in 2013. He is now specializing in wedding and portraiture photography.



**Scott D. Appell**, the Green Man, originally from NYC, is a garden writer, horticultural taxonomist and ethnobotanist. He writes, gardens, and teaches horticulture. He happens to be a professional baker as well.



**José Carrasquillo** has lived in Vieques for 11 years. Stateside he's a theatre director and educator. Here in paradise José is the co-owner of a guesthouse, works as a volunteer for not-for-profit organizations, and logs hundreds of miles every year running all over Vieques.

### Nancy Gilbert

Nancy has made Vieques her home since 2007. She finds balance on the island through Rotary activities, being a caregiver to people, places, and animals and her passion for growing plants.



**Tom Kirkbright**, a USCG Licensed Captain, and his wife Caroline first set foot on Vieques in 2004. They fell in love with its people, beaches and charm. They bought a house and moved from NJ to enjoy the island life and spend time "On The Water".

**Cynthia Nicholson** came to Vieques over 20 years ago and was immediately smitten with its wild beauty. Cynthia has served as an editor, producer, and writer for many national publications such as *Cooking Light*, *Country Living*, and *Real Simple*.





**Tom O'Grady Jr.** is an author and freelance writer from Philadelphia with literature and writing degrees from Temple University (B.A.) and Rutgers University (M.A.). Tom has written in numerous commercial genres including business and training, marketing and advertising and newspaper and magazine features. He has focused on writing fiction for the last five years and has published four novels, all available on Amazon.com and select stores.

**Steve Simonsen** is a photographer and underwater naturalist residing on St. John. Steve specializes in underwater, aerial, villa and resort photography and video.



**Mark Martin Bras** plays an important role in protecting and preserving the ecological environment of Vieques as well as educating the youth through his daily work and Manta programs at the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust. He has helped redefine light pollution standards for Puerto Rico and is working tirelessly to preserve and study the BioBay.



**Nicole Varady** enjoys discovering the vast differences between NY city life and living and working in Vieques. She is constantly fielding questions from tourists and visitors about Vieques and island living, and is contributing these to the VQS Insider.



**Karl Alexander** has been documenting the nature and culture of Vieques almost continuously since he arrived on the island. He can often be heard splashing through mud puddles at midnight on his mountain bike hunting for his next location.



**ON THE COVER:**  
**Photograph by Steve Simonsen**  
Our mermaid and mer"man" Moriah Barone and Carlito Miró may just be the closest thing to these mystical water legends. Both free divers, the couple can

hold their breath for long periods of time. Simonsen: "I kind of forgot that they weren't in scuba gear as I was photographing them. They just kept circling each other above me and going up and down. I was surprised when they finally went up for air and I remembered that they were just holding their breath...I almost forgot that they were actually human and not mermaids."

# Trade Winds

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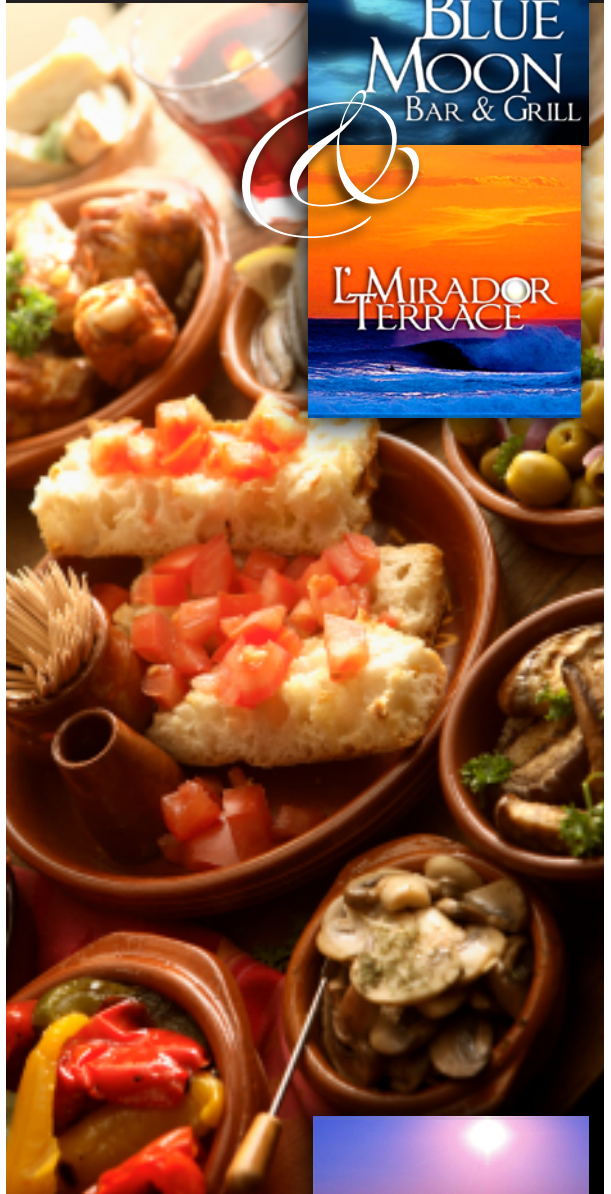
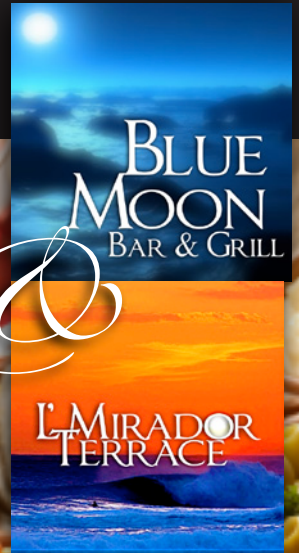
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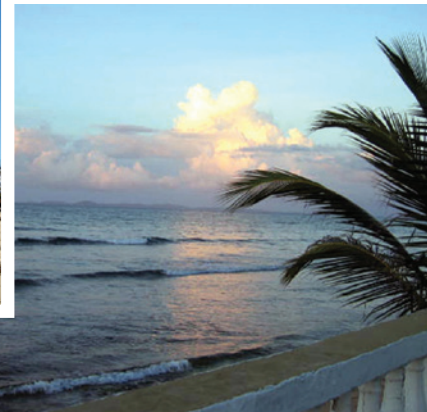
Owner/Broker Julie Dechter's top priority is to provide excellent service for her clients. Employing a contagious positive energy, she takes great pleasure in meeting the needs of both buyers and sellers. Her caring attitude and relentless determination, coupled with her knowledge of the Vieques real estate market, make her a thorough and dependable agent.



**A Touch of Glass Beach House** Located on the quiet edge of town in Isabel and with direct and private access to Glass Beach, this 3 bedroom/3 bath home is offered turn-key and with an excellent rental history. Featuring various indoor and outdoor living spaces, it has an excellent layout for friends and family and is comfortably furnished. Enjoy spectacular ocean views from the decks, meander through the lush tropical landscaping down to the beach for snorkeling and glass collecting and walk to shops and restaurants a few blocks away. The best of all worlds! \$879,000

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This house enjoys a prime location on beautiful La Chata Beach in the Bravos de Boston/Santa Maria Playa neighborhood. The spacious two-bedroom/two bath home is privately situated on a large .37 acre titled land parcel with direct access to the sandy beach. There is plenty of room for expansion of the residence and the perfect space for construction of a fantastic swimming pool. Absolutely stunning, panoramic views of ocean, sky and neighboring islands. What Caribbean dreams are made of! \$695,000



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## NAMES, IDENTITY, AND HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

During the time of the U.S. Navy presence on Vieques, the beaches were renamed based on colored flags placed on them for training exercises. Set in motion by elders and community leaders from Vieques, the effort has been underway to reclaim the former names of the beaches and restore their cultural significance and longevity. Internet sites and publications still use the Navy names of beaches and you will hear many islanders still using the English names as well. But while you are here, please paint a mental map in your mind with the original Spanish names. The English names are listed on the right for your reference to the pull-out map on the inside back cover. Thank you for participating in this milestone effort by honoring and using the original Spanish names of the beautiful beaches of Vieques.

### CARACAS

Red Beach

### LA CHIVA

Blue Beach

### CAMPAÑA

Purple Beach

### PLAYUELA

Garcia Beach

### LA PLATA

Orchid Beach

### MATIAS

Yellow Beach

### PATA PRIETA

Secret Beach

### PUNTA ARENAS

Green Beach

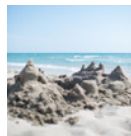
insider  
tips



**Fill Up or Top Off!** During high season [Christmas through Easter] and holidays the two gas stations on the island routinely run out of gas. The gas trucks come on the ferry so it can be a long wait if you run out. So if the lines at the station are not long, stop in. When it is busy the lines form in one direction only and sometimes go around the block. If you see an empty spot at the pump, before pulling in, check to see if there is a line coming from the opposite direction. Go with cash, they don't take debit or credit cards.



**Fix a Flat** Pick one of these up at any convenience store or gas station on the island and save yourself a lot of trouble. Flats happen and usually not in the most convenient places. Just connect, inflate and go! It will only seal temporarily so call your rental company for directions on where to go to get it fixed.



**Leave No Trace** Remember to leave the beach just as you found it. If you or your children dig holes or make sand castles, level the sand before you go. Many beaches are turtle nesting beaches and baby sea turtles can get stuck in a hole or diverted by sand mounds on their way to the ocean.



**Cell Service at the Beach** If you hire a publico to take you to the beaches remember to arrange a pick up time before they drive off because cell service may not be available.



**A Twist or a Tap** If your car won't start when leaving the beach, before panicking, first check your battery cable connections. On rough roads they tend to bounce and loosen. Tighten them up or give them a tap and try again!

# Love Stories

PABLO A. DELERME AYALA  
& MARIA JOSEPHINA GUTIERREZ DIAZ

BY: TOM O'GRADY AND SKYLA DELERME

Like any picture of a couple married for over fifty years it is faded. Yellowing and cracks accent the paper, and the once sharp blacks and whites are now soft shades of gray. Staring at the scene one can colorize it like an old movie, filling in the rich sky and ocean blues, the deep palm greens, the bright white clothing and sand. Her arm lies comfortably on his broad shoulder while his wraps their child protectively. Despite the absence of smiles they are happy. They are a family. They are together.

Pablo A. Delerme Ayala was born on Vieques on November 19, 1937. Maria Josephina Gutierrez Diaz was born on the big island on April 21, 1944. The world was a very different place. Without the distraction of TVs, computers and cellphones they grew up connected to their families.

Granddaughter Skyla Delerme asked her grandfather Pablo, affectionately called Papa Jun, how they met. He first saw her, he says, "at a dance in Tortuguero, where the Agro Center is now." And what about her caught his eye? "Todo." Everything. In 1960 they would finally meet at a social event. Afterwards they would do what all young people of that time did; they went dancing. Papa Jun told Skyla he got to know Maria, "Poco a poco." Little by little. "The first kiss was in the Vieques movie theatre, Teatro Nadya, in 1960.

Papa Jun finished 11th grade then joined the Army, eventually ending up in Georgia. But his Maria was never far from his heart. In the summer of 1962 he returned to Vieques, and in the family home in Isabel II they married. Pablo was 24. Maria was 18. Over the next four years two sons and a daughter arrived, all born in the hospital on Vieques.

Like the faded picture, the cracks and lines of time now draw across their faces. When asked to offer advice to young couples the answer comes, as always, from the wisdom of age, its simplicity self-evident to partners who will celebrate their 53rd anniversary in June. "Support each other and have mutual respect for each other and everything will be fine." They know. They are a family. They are together.



## DID YOU KNOW?

In the 1950s and 60s there was a movie theatre in the building where the Municipal Multiuse Center is now. People would meet in the plaza before the show. Pablo remembers that on *Ladies Night* women would pay 10 cents and gentlemen 15 cents.



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KELLY THOMPSON

## THE FIRE WITHIN SANDRA

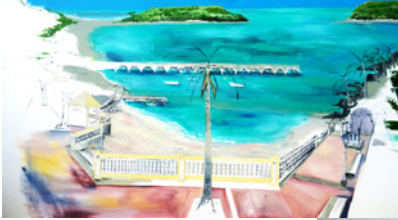
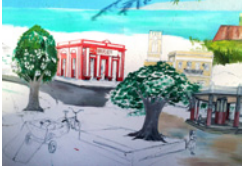
# Reyes

BY: JOSÉ CARRASQUILLO

I ask Sandra Reyes, “When did you start to paint?” There is a prolonged pause that suggests she’s heard a different question, like *when did you start breathing?* She brings the pause to an end with a commanding, “Ever since I can remember.” Her early memories are peppered with stories of painting on every possible surface. Cardboard was a favorite. As a child she would run out of the house after a rainfall to play with mud, using earth colors to paint.

Years later at the University of Puerto Rico a professor was dismissive of her talent. When I asked what was said, she responds by saying, “To him, I was completely invisible. His behavior towards the work was discouraging and emotionally devastating. And yet I never stopped thinking of myself as an artist. And that fire within kept burning...”

She arrived in Vieques in the 80s and had to work a number of odd jobs to survive. Still she painted like mad. Today she reflects that “all of those paintings were my therapy, my escape.” When I mentioned how much



VISIT SANDRA'S  
 MURAL IN  
 FRONT OF  
 LA LANCHITA  
 GUESTHOUSE IN  
 BRAVOS DE  
 BOSTON AND  
 TAKE A TRIP  
 INTO THE PAST.



I love her first painting on canvas, an old man sitting on a chair, a dog by his side, she takes great joy in describing not only the painting, but relating that the painting represents a defining moment in her life. With its completion she went through a door and never turned back.

Her children, Michael, Kiani and Alexandra, who she lovingly refers to as her tribe, fueled her inspiration. As has Vieques, a place Reyes sees as truly magical, where anything is possible. That magic is a constant. She remembers being in debt and without cash reserves while raising three young children when Doug and Marikay McHoul, owners of the guesthouse, La Lanchita, fell in love with one of her paintings. "I had not a nickel in my pocket and they bought one of my paintings at that very moment!" A few days later they came back and bought multiple paintings to decorate each room of their guesthouse. Years later the McHouls hired Sandra to paint a mermaid mural by the swimming pool. And then, when the elevated parking area of La Lanchita produced some wall space, the McHouls thought of it as a canvas for a public mural and knew Sandra was the artist for the job. "Marikay had very specific requirements," Reyes remembers. "She wanted it to be about Vieques, and

she wanted it to have a sense of place and history." The commission took over six months to complete, and the result, Sandra says, was "shaped by the Viequenses who stopped by on a daily basis to see the work and reminisce about their lives and their past. Old people would stop by and begin to cry. They felt their stories had been forgotten, and in the mural they saw the stories of their grandparents and their families, or of the places where they had been born and lived. Stories of the plaza, love stories, parties and celebrations, stories that form the Vieques diaspora."

Sandra knows the work of the great muralists like Diego Rivera, and loves the power of public art and how it can transform a community. One of her dreams is to turn Vieques into the next Wynwood, a neighborhood in Miami whose walls have become the largest display of public art in the world, attracting some of the world's best muralists and millions of visitors. Sandra wants young people to paint and express their passion and artistry. She maintains that in Vieques "we have wall space! I want that fire that burns inside every child artist to never die. The mural in front of La Lanchita is just a first step. I'm confident painting can and will transform Vieques."

**PHOTOGRAPHING SANDRA AND HER WORLD / KELLY THOMPSON**

*I have been lucky to visit Sandra Reyes' home on more than one occasion, but today I am here to photograph her. Stepping into her house feels like losing footing in river rapids and being swept into a whirlpool of creativity. The pathways flow through the house, determined by stacked canvases, sculptures, and easels holding works in progress. The kitchen table is covered with piles of books three feet high. Paintings fill every available wall space and are propped against each other on the floor. Each room is a gallery or studio with necessities like a kitchen thrown in the mix. In the garage, pottery, glass, old tiles for mosaics and paint cover every surface available. There's constant motion and re-arrangement and yet Sandra's presence brings calm confidence. There is nothing chaotic about how she works. Every painting has a story. A painting from a sonogram of a baby that hasn't been born yet is tacked to the corner of a canvas. The soft baby sleeping in the swirls of fluid rests directly across from the ghostly, unfinished sketch of an elderly woman, drawn into her rocking chair and waiting for color. Sandra stands solidly between the two portraits, commenting on the wonderful cycle of life, and I feel fortunate to be here.*

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*“i do”*



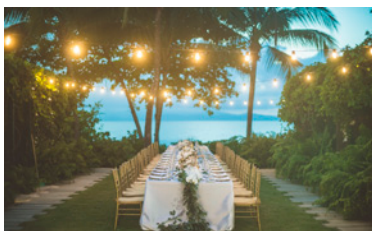
"Our wedding was everything we ever dreamed and more. We look at our wedding video and photo album regularly and reminisce about going back on an anniversary. The beaches rival any beaches you've ever seen, the island was peaceful, joyful, exotic and beautiful. The culture was something that we had never experienced and was unique to the island. The wedding vendors made everything perfect and we couldn't

have been happier with our wedding day."

Randee Johnson



PHOTOS BY: E.P. ANDERSON PHOTOGRAPHY



I always ask for a photo of the bride and groom and if possible the dress. This really helps me get to know them. Sometimes seeing her skin, her frame, her hair style, it helps me imagine the bouquet on her wedding day.

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# TYING THE KNOT IN VIEQUES

WE'VE GOT IT ALL!



Take gorgeous backdrops, uncrowded beaches and a laid back vibe and you have Vieques, a romantic getaway without comparison. But when that romance becomes something more life-changing, it's time to say "I Do", and that romantic getaway becomes your wedding memories for a lifetime. Vieques has become one of the hottest wedding destinations in the Caribbean, offering a checklist of amenities many couples want for their special day. We've put together a collection of info and experiences that will get you started on your way down the aisle, or beach, or boat, or, well, it's all up to you! The possibilities are as plentiful as the island is gorgeous. Grab your partner and let's have a wedding!

## LOCATION

Puerto Rico is easily accessed by much of the world and all of the United States. South Americans and Europeans regularly visit here, and flights to San Juan from the East and West Coast of America are frequent. Plus, you can travel on your driver's license from most of the States. (Check with your State's requirements) Plan a night or two in San Juan on the way to or from Vieques to add to the adventure.

## VIBE

While a stress free wedding may sound like an oxymoron, it is possible when you're surrounded by breathtaking beaches and crystal-blue waters. People are laid back and friendly. Why wouldn't they be? It's a tropical paradise. Your wedding planner and vendors have a charismatic flair that can only be found on an island, and their plan for you is a stress-free experience. "Vieques is a very different destination than Puerto Rico or anywhere else. It is untouched, pristine and very calming. It is like going back in time and the guests love that. It's hard not to enjoy yourself." Chezelle, owner of CD Weddings

## BEACHES

Say "I Do" right there with your toes in the sand. The biggest decision most folks have is which beach. The selection is amazing, with each beach providing a unique version of the marriage of sand and sea. White sand, black sand, powdery, lightly grainy; waves, no waves; remote and nearby. At certain times of the year you might be the only two on your beach. Not all beaches

allow commercial activity of any kind and some beaches require a permit. It is important to work with a wedding planner if you want a beach wedding.

## WEATHER

With year-round sunshine and average temperatures of 80 degrees Vieques celebrates the outdoors. Beach, poolside and veranda weddings are the preferred choice of most couples and there are plenty of choices. Sandy Malone, owner of Weddings in Vieques, says almost all of her couples want an outdoor or beach wedding. She offers reassurance regarding the weather. "We can't control the weather, and rain in the Caribbean is totally unpredictable. But most of the time it's a passing shower. There is *always* a Plan B for beach weddings.

## VENUES

What's your dream? Beach wedding or beachside villa, a lush rainforest setting, next to a lighthouse or historical oceanside church, bohemian style guesthouse, bluffs overlooking the ocean? Vieques has the venue to accommodate your wildest dreams. Get married on a sailboat, ride in on horseback or paddleboards, the options to be creative are endless.

## PRICE

Vieques has venues and styles to fit almost any destination wedding budget. Some people plan it as a family reunion, wedding and honeymoon all in one package. Souad and Stephanie married at the W in October of last year. "We scoured New



"...one of the benefits of a destination wedding is having the gorgeous destination as your backdrop...not much else is needed."  
-Bride, Andrea O'Conner

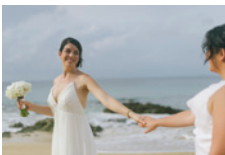


"We heard Vieques was a beautiful island, with untouched beaches, and great local flare, as well as a reputation for being very gay friendly, which was important to us for our same-sex wedding. Once we visited, we knew we found a hidden gem." -Lara and Ryan

York City, upstate New York, and California, and nothing spoke to us - or fit the budget. Surprisingly, we were able to have a wedding here with 60 guests that fit our budget and our needs."

#### LGBT COMMUNITY

Vieques has the reputation of being the most gay-friendly island in the Caribbean. Bernadette Coveney-Smith, a Boston-based wedding planner, said, "The island already had a reputation as being open and gay-friendly. It's on the mental short list of places safe to travel." Following the U.S. Supreme Court's June 26th landmark decision that held bans on same-sex marriage were unconstitutional, Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla announced that Puerto Rico would be in full compliance with the ruling within 15 days. Same-sex marriage in every municipality of Puerto Rico, including Vieques, is now legal. Vieques has truly and proudly become a wedding destination for all! The paper work and requirements are exactly the same for all couples.



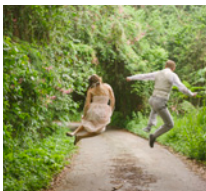
"It is so nice to see two women or two men holding hands here. We are from NYC so we don't even think about it. But it's great to feel so comfortable here."  
Soud & Stephanie

Not enough reasons to tie the knot here? Okay, how about some unique experiences only available on Vieques.

Imagine a trip to the brightest bioluminescent bay on the planet the night before or after your wedding ceremony. Can you imagine a more beautiful way to connect to nature and one another? The bioluminescent bay has always been a popular spot to propose, and many couples have returned to Vieques to fulfill their promise.

Another growing trend in ceremonies is the mixing of sand. Vieques has a very unique black sand beach and many couples choose to mix the white and black sand symbolizing the blending of their lives.

"Anyone planning a trip there should relax and realize it will all work out just fine. ... don't skimp on not going on the Bio-Bay tour, truly one of the most phenomenal things in this world."  
-Randee Johnson



PHOTOS BY: E.P. ANDERSON PHOTOGRAPHY

## THINGS TO CONSIDER AHEAD OF TIME

### MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

If you are used to all-inclusive resorts, stretch limos, last minute shopping sprees, or a hip-happening and plentiful nightlife, Vieques may not be the island for you. Visit the island and/or ask a lot of questions if you have particular requirements. Or, if you're fussy. (Let's be honest.) It's okay. Many wedding couples are. It's your big day. So find out ahead of time what works. "As soon as a couple asks me for information about our all-inclusive resorts I know the couple hasn't been to Vieques or done enough research to make a decision about having a destination wedding here yet." -Sandy Malone, Weddings in Vieques

### ADVANCE PLANNING

Things move slowly here. The old "island time" is why you'll relax after you're here, but before that, think ahead. Remember, we are an island off of an island. Not everything will ship here and things need to be ordered in advance. Planning a year ahead, not uncommon for any wedding anywhere, will help to ensure that you get the venue and vendors you want. If your wedding is during high season (Nov-April) you will need to book accommodations at least 6 months ahead, rental cars and transportation services even sooner. There are only so many cars on the island.

### TIME OF YEAR

High season begins after Thanksgiving, sprinkling more visitors and activity through the holidays, then solidifying in January all the way to April. May through August has traditionally slowed, but recent years has found the island just as busy through the summer months. Hurricane season technically starts June 30th and runs through October 30th, but (fingers crossed) Vieques tends not to see storm activity till the beginning of September. Mother Nature is in charge so it's a roll of the dice. September and October bring some business shut-downs as local owners take their vacations.

### CEREMONY OFFICIAN

Your officiant needs to be licensed in Puerto Rico. If you have an officiant family member or friend, minister, justice, etc, whom you'd like to have in the ceremony they must work with a licensed officiant here.

### PAPERWORK

There is just as much misinformation on the internet about the requirements for getting married in Puerto Rico as there is correct information. Requirements change all the time so it is very important to work with a planner. They can inform you of the proper documents to bring with you, and when you arrive, help you carry out filing the paperwork correctly.

**GREAT STORY:** *One couple hired me to plan their wedding, sight unseen, and arrived to do a venue tour to choose the right spot for their wedding. After two days of touring every villa on the island, they chose a house and told me it was PERFECT, but that the bride absolutely hated chickens and I had to make sure she didn't see any "loose poultry" during their entire wedding weekend. They ended up getting married at a country club in Charleston, South Carolina. Vieques is not for everyone. It's for special couples who truly appreciate it for exactly what it is.*

-Sandy Malone, Weddings in Vieques

"I develop a really close relationship before they even get here. I know all of their food allergies, what the father of the bride likes to drink, their cousins' names... We try to spoil them as much as we can."

- Vanessa, W Resort and Spa Event Coordinator



RIVER KARMEN PHOTOGRAPHY

I look for lulls in the fun. That's when I know I need to change it up a bit and get the party going again." DJ Paul



E.P. ANDERSON PHOTOGRAPHY



"Couples who ask about our beaches and our biobay have likely been here, or done their homework, before considering Vieques as their wedding destination. I make sure that every bride or groom I talk to knows exactly what Vieques is, and what Vieques is not. We aren't the place for wedding couples who want big nightclubs or casinos, and I want to be sure to manage expectations from the beginning.-Sandy Malone, Weddings in Vieques



## BEST RECOMMENDATION

If you want your wedding experience to be enjoyable, stress-free and a beautiful memory, regardless of the size or scope of your event, use a wedding planner familiar with Vieques. On a unique island in a unique part of the world they are your best friends, having already experienced the challenges and overcome them. Don't worry about how many questions you ask or how many times you contact them. Do the planning work at home using their expertise, but when you arrive on Vieques STOP PLANNING! Let them go to work for you. If you stress the details you will miss the best reason you are here - to have a meaningful, memorable wedding in a beautiful, exotic location that sweeps you, your spouse and your guests off your collective feet.

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**ISLAND REALITIES**

**TIPS FROM THE PLANNERS**

**Candles** blow out in the ever-constant Trade Winds, even in lanterns. Use LED candles or lights whenever possible, particularly outdoors.

Don't plan on checking in to your hotel the same day as your wedding. Most hotels have a **check-in time** of 3 or 4 pm and won't be able to accommodate an earlier check in -even for brides.

Your dress, jewelry and shoes and any other important items for your wedding day should be in a **carry on** in case luggage is lost. Ask **TSA** to wear gloves when they inspect your dress.

Plan your ceremony at least **90 minutes before sunset** to allow enough time for those fabulous photos. Give your photographer a **family member "combo sheet"** to make family portraits go much faster.

Avoid flowers with **pollen** or a strong smell like tiger lillies. Even if you don't have allergies someone at the wedding might.

**Ship items in advance** and send to a physical address. USPS, UPS and FedEx schedules do not apply to Vieques and things always take longer to arrive than you would expect.

When it comes to wedding cake there isn't a **frosting** made that won't melt under our glaring sun and tropical temperatures. Keep it in the shade and protected from the wind. No one likes a droopy, sandy cake.

Your wedding planner can make completing paperwork for **Puerto Rico's requirements** much easier. Get the paperwork done immediately in case the offices are closed. Mucho holidays in Puerto Rico.

Sending a Vieques **travel information packet** to invited guests BEFORE the RSVP date is a must. Helping your guests manage their expectations will improve their experience as well.

**Did you know?** Many of the streets are not named, so many residents have no physical address. Most have a P.O. box. Residents drive a distance down the road to the community mailbox or to downtown Isabel II to the Post Office to retrieve their mail. Notices of packages require a trip to the Post Office.



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"The only things we would've done differently perhaps is not worried about anything and stayed a few days longer!"  
Bride-Randee Johnson



CONTRIBUTORS: Sandy Malone, Weddings in Vieques | Anabelle Barranco, STEM Events | Chezelle Rodríguez, CD Weddings | Vanessa Valedón, Meetings and Events Manager W Retreat & SPA

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# 15 Questions Answered

by: Nicole Varady

## When is the high season?

The high season lasts from Christmas to Easter but is busy during all holidays.

## When is the official hurricane season?

Officially, June 1 to November 30

## Why are green vegetables so hard to find here? Aren't they easy to grow in this climate?

Vegetables are extremely difficult to grow here due to salt and insects. There are times of the year when there is too much rain or not enough.

## Do I need to tip on Vieques?

YES you need to tip on Vieques; standard percentages you would use in the states. 18%-20% or more for exceptional service.

## Do Vieques residents go to the beach every day?

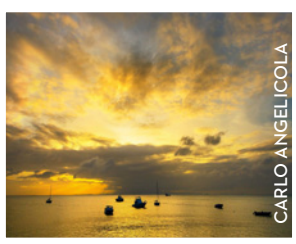
Not if we have jobs! Many seasonal workers here lament not going to the beach as often as they'd like.

## What is the sales tax in Puerto Rico?

The SUT (sales and use tax) was raised from 7% to 11.5 % on July 1, 2015.

## Can I bring a rental car on the ferry?

No. All car rental companies prohibit inter-island travel.



CARLO ANGELICOLA

## Is a rental car necessary?

It depends on your travel goals, where you are staying, and your sense of adventure. Many beaches are located miles out onto the Reserve or edges of the island. Walking to them isn't an option in most cases. Golf carts, scooters, motorized bikes and regular bicycles are all available for rent as well. Publicos (vans) and taxis are available island-wide.

## What is the price of gas on the island?

1 gallon = 3.78541 liters so multiply the current price at the gas station by 3.785.

## How are utilities supplied to Vieques? Is electric really expensive here?

Water and electric are supplied to Vieques from the mainland via the electric and water utilities of Puerto Rico (AEE) and (AAA).

The 2015 average cost per kilowatt hour in the continental U.S. was 10.33 in 2015. Puerto Rico pays almost three times that, with the average kilowatt hour costing between \$.24 and \$.29 cents.

## Should I go to Culebra for the day?

There is no direct ferry from Vieques to Culebra, so you have to travel via Fajardo. Schedules being what they are, it is not a realistic 'day trip'. Flying from Vieques to Culebra is much quicker and not cost prohibitive. If you secure your flights in advance, a day trip can be accomplished.

## Do I need to wear a seatbelt?

Seatbelt laws are strictly enforced in Puerto Rico and, specifically, on Vieques. Fines are \$50.00 per occupant not wearing a seatbelt.

## What are the cricket-like sounds at night?

Frogs. Puerto Rico has 16 species of tiny tree frogs called Coquis. Only one is considered the true coqui and sings its name. Koe-Kee!

## What time do the bars close?

Legally bars are required to close at 1am - Sunday thru Thursday, 2:30 am - Friday and Saturday. Many bar/restaurants close earlier so check with your establishment of choice.

## Do I need 4 wheel drive?

If you are heading out to Navio Beach or other less accessible areas, and it has recently rained, yes, you will most likely need it. Otherwise, it's not necessary.

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by Mark Martin

## THE MAGIC IT HOLDS

To gaze upon it is to know. To float upon it is to see. No poet's words will reveal its essence. No song's melody will capture its spirit. No photograph will expose its soul. My Bay of magic can only be captured by the heart.

A visit to this wonder of the world changes everything. To the guides and fishers and students who have called it their home, the world is different. The Bay stays with them. They see the streaking light in their dreams and miss its energy when they are apart. Scientists are humbled and disarmed by the power the bay creates, its cycles elusive, its formula undetermined. The Bay is a delicate, enigmatic, improvable working system that lives like a testament to nature's design, and a reminder that we should follow its path.

More than an amazing place to see on Earth, the Bay is Nature's therapy, bringing with it an instant healing, the kind humans need these days to restore our connection and re-energize our hope that all of nature is not lost.

The Bay inspires love, and under a sea of falling stars many lovers have professed it, serenaded by a chorus of coquis and calming waters; open hearts ready to be joined. Many a brave soul has extended their love, pulling a ring from the water covered in glowing, liquid diamonds, offering nature's life and their own.

### For me, the Bay is my life.

I have chosen her over other loves; a routine life, a practical job, a family. I have tried to shield her from the lights that darken her glow and the poisons that foul her waters. Beauty must be cared for and protected, for the indescribable magic of nature is delicate and destroyable.

And so I call upon you who have seen it to join the efforts to save the Bay by letting her live, doing whatever it is she does, without interference, until she chooses to die, or not, *naturally*. I invite you to come see her and fall in love with her and the world she represents. Let us forget that we are humans apart from nature, and remember we are part of nature. We must. It is the key to everything. Do it. For the nature of love, for the love of nature.

For the love of the Bay.

### THE SCIENCE

The magical light of Puerto Mosquito is created by an unusual wizard called Pyro-dinium bahamense (whirling fire of the Bahamas). This single cell microscopic plankton is able to create an eerie bluish light by mixing two chemicals whenever something touches it. The result is spectacular. A ride on a pedal or electric boat, a canoe or a kayak puts you front row for an underwater light show where manta rays fly through a sea of ghostly stars and fish trail electric-blue wakes in the darkness. Once in a while, a manatee moves gently through the sparkling scene, large yet graceful in its watery environment, helping us understand why ancient sailors believed in mermaids.

The brightest bioluminescent bay in the world, Puerto Mosquito is one of the last examples of a pristine bay. A majestic, mangrove forest, seagrass beds, a coral reef and neighboring lagoons have combined to create and protect one of the most delicate and unique ecosystems on earth providing ideal conditions in the water for dinoflagellates (whirling tail organism) to thrive.



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CYNTHIA NICHOLSON

Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust [www.VCHT.org](http://www.VCHT.org) is an important partner in conserving the bay for you, me, visitors, students, scientists, and most importantly for future generations. The Trust works with the Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources, the Municipality of Vieques, and other agencies to ensure that the bay will have a healthy, sustainable future with science guiding the way. If you have visited the bio bay and fallen in love like us, we are asking you to show your support by donating \$1 or more to help support the Trust's ongoing effort to protect and conserve this most important place.



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QR CODE TO  
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DONATION AND  
THANK YOU!

**HERE ARE SOME OTHER WAYS TO ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR BELOVED BIO BAY:**

- Be sure to visit the bay with a licensed tour operator.
- Visit the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust on the Malecon in Esperanza (787-741-8550) to learn more about the natural history of the island and about the ecosystem that makes up the bioluminescent bay.
- Become a member of the VCHT or purchase a membership for friends and family.
- Visit VCHT's unique gift shop - all purchases directly support VCHT's ongoing education and research programs concerning the bio bay.
- Make a donation in honor of a loved one that appreciated the bioluminescent bay and its special beauty.
- LIKE our Facebook page, write about your bio bay experience on Trip Advisor, and visit our website [www.VCHT.org](http://www.VCHT.org) for the latest news and updates about the Bio Bay.

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WITH CAPT. TOM KIRKBRIGHT

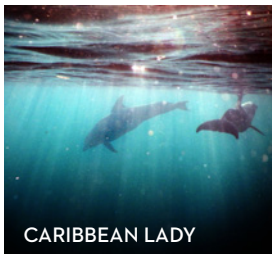
So you thought this day would never come, but finally you made it, on vacation in a beautiful tropical paradise. You have planned well; a Bio-bay excursion, maybe a trip to the Fort Conde de Mirasol, a guided Sugar Mill tour or a few days just relaxing on the beach. There are endless opportunities to keep you and yours entertained on Vieques. But maybe you're looking for something special, hands on, exhilarating, a highlight to your visit. That's an easy fix. It's a day spent "On The Water". Let Vieques Insider guide you through the options.



SEA VIEQUES



LITTLE BOAT SAILING



CARIBBEAN LADY



MARAUDER



VIEQUES SAILING

## SAILING

The trade winds propel you through the clear pristine water. The sounds of birds, the wind filling sails and water lapping off the hull are clear and unencumbered. The gentle roll brings you to that place where all the stress of daily life washes off in the breeze. It's time to go sailing.

**CARIBBEAN LADY SAILING CHARTERS** offers group and private full day charters from Esperanza on a 47' Beneteau Oceanic Sloop. Departing at 10 am, 11 am for sunset, the Caribbean Lady returns at 4 pm or 5 pm, respectively. Depending on wind direction she sails east to the open water reefs of Blue Tang off Cayo La Chiva, or Lemmon at Ensonada Honda, both offering incredible snorkeling, or west off the beautiful beaches and reef at Punta Areas.

- Food - fresh fruit and veggie appetizers while underway - complete sandwich buffet with vegetarian and gluten free options and homemade desserts while at anchor
- Beverage - water, soda, juice, beer and rum punch
- Equipment - snorkel gear including vests, two person kayak with vests, floatation noodles

**MARAUDER SAILING CHARTERS** offers half day/full day sunset, private and custom charters from Esperanza to Sun Bay, Pata Prieta or Playulea for a guided snorkel tour. The Marauder, a 34' vintage sloop, has been updated with modern conveniences for your comfort.

- Food - gourmet lunch (featured in March 2015 issue of Elle Magazine)
- Beverage - all day open bar
- Equipment - all snorkel gear, AED



MARAUDER

**SEA VIEQUES** offers two daily charters on the Winds of Freedom, 8:30 am to 12:30 pm and 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm, and sunset charters, 5 pm to 7 pm, from the fisherman's pier across from the ferry dock in Isabella Segunda. Trips to Puerto Diablo and Cul-ebra can also be booked. The daily trips on this 30' Freedom sloop will take you to the amazing open water reef of Cayo Blanco, with an in-depth explanation of the abundant sea life and how to protect our precious reefs.

- Food - peach mango salsa, pita chips, spinach dip, granola bars and fresh fruit
- Beverage - open bar with specialty drinks - Pina Colodas, Pain Killers, Chichaitos and more
- Equipment - all snorkel gear



VIEQUES CLASSIC CHARTERS

**ABABOR SAILING** offers private half day or 2 hour sailing charters or a sailing class for up to four people from the fishermen's dock on Rompeolas. These charters sail the calm leeward side of the pier on the Enterprise, a seventeen foot sloop. Half day charters will sail to Punta Arenas for snorkeling or kayaking if requested. Trips depart at 8:30 AM or 10:00 AM. Sailing rentals are available.

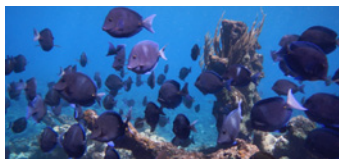
- Food- snacks
- Beverages- water, soda, juice
- Equipment- all snorkel gear, kayak

**VIEQUES SAILING COMPANY** departs the fisherman's pier in Isabella Segunda on Willo, their 32' Pearson sloop, for half day charters to Cayo Blanco from 8 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 4 pm. Full day charters to Mosquito Reef and Puerto Diablo are from 8 am to 4 pm. Sunset sails from 4 pm to 6 pm are also available. Half and full day trips to snorkel the vibrant north shore reefs can be arranged.

- Food - half day snacks, full day sandwiches
- Beverages - water, soda, beer, rum punch
- Equipment - all snorkel gear

**LITTLEBOAT SAILING** is a fast paced romp around Ensenada Honda on Hobie Catamarans. These guided snorkeling tours can be booked for the morning or afternoon to Lemon Reef or the mangrove forest. Littleboat will customize your charter if you schedule ahead.

- Food - snacks
- Beverages - water
- Equipment - complete snorkel gear



**VIEQUES CLASSIC CHARTERS** lets you hop on board the Shalamar, a 47' classic wooden yawl based in Esperanza. The Shalamar heads east or west based on wind conditions. Breakfast, half day and sunset cruises are available, and she can accommodate specific sailing requirements. This trip emphasizes the sailing experience.

- Food - breakfast or lunch provided. Sunset - champagne and appetizers
- Beverages - open bar all day - alcoholic and nonalcoholic
- Equipment - all snorkel gear, sunscreen and towels

**EAST ISLAND EXCURSIONS**, based out of Fajardo, features the 62' East Wind Sailing Catamaran. This ship has a capacity of 80 guests for large wedding parties or reunions of 60 or more. They will pick up passengers at 10 am at Mosquito Pier, Rampeolos. Sail to Punta Arenas for snorkeling, swimming and beachcombing then return at 3:30 pm.

- Food - lunch buffet - fresh fruit, deli meats, cheeses, vegetarian pasta and other salads
- Beverages - Pina Coladas, rum punch, soda, juice, ice tea and water
- Equipment - all snorkel gear
- Food and Beverage upgrades are available

**AHOY** Sailing's schedule is flexible; half day, full day, sunset or overnight trips can be arranged. Based in-season at Ensonada Honda, this 42' Pearson ketch christened the Avalon sails to Lemon Reef for snorkeling, but will customize your charter as requested. Sails to Culebra, Puerto del Ray and Punta Areas can also be chartered.

- Food - vegan
- Beverages - as requested
- Equipment - all snorkel gear



## POWER OUT

You grab the rail a little tighter, your feet react, instinctively taking a wider stance. The Captain is urging the throttles forward to cruising speed and you feel your pulse quicken. With eyes fixated on an ever changing shore line morphing from majestic rock cliffs to glistening white sand beaches, you feel alert, in tune with what surrounds you. Yes, you are a powerboat enthusiast. Let's get you out there.

**VIEQUES POWERCAT:** welcome aboard the Powercats, two luxury power catamarans, the Wildcat of 47 feet or the Wildcat Too of 51 feet, that depart from Esperanza. These upscale cruises leave the dock at 10 am and can be booked for 4 or 6 hours. Three hour sunset cruises and overnight trips with a Captain and an onboard chef are also available.

- Food - gourmet lunch; Sunset - hors d'oeuvres; Overnight - gourmet meals
- Beverages - beer, wine, rum punch, juice, soft drinks and water
- Equipment - all snorkel gear, paddleboard and kayak

**FIN TIME ADVENTURES:** the Fintastic, a 38' custom sport-fisherman, offers both fishing and snorkeling or combination charters. From Esperanza, fishing and combination charters depart at 10 am. Snorkeling charters leave at 10 am and 1 pm. Fin Time will also charter to Culebra from Mosquito Pier at 8:30 am, or customize to your desire.

- Food - snacks and sandwiches
- Beverages - soda, juices and water
- Equipment - all snorkel gear, all fishing gear

## SAIL / POWER

For larger groups of up to 12 passengers, Vieques Powercat and Vieques Classic Charters offer a unique combination charter experience, sail out, power back.

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# Off the beaten path

BY: JOSÉ CARASQUILLO



During the winter months, hundreds of visitors flock to Vieques seeking warm weather, sunny beaches and outdoor activities. The better known beaches can get somewhat crowded, so for those that prefer less company here are three amazing spots that get little or no traffic.

## BLACK SAND BEACH

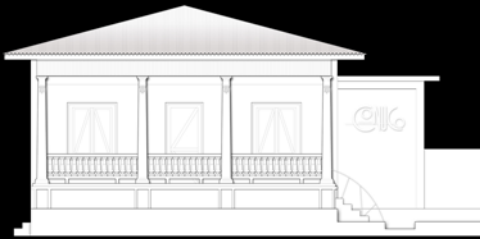
A beguiling expanse of magnetic black sand against a dramatic cliff makes for a dreamy cove and a FREE spa!! Gently rub the sand on your skin for exfoliation or cocoon your whole body for 40 minutes. The naturally occurring magnetite is known for aligning the body. Located on the south side of Vieques, the beach is a good mile west of Esperanza. Take 996 to 201. Turn left on 201. About 50 yards on the left, you will see that the guard rail ends. Take the trail down to the creek (Quebrada Urbana) and follow it to the sea—it takes about 10 minutes. The creek can be muddy, but experiencing this beautiful beach is well worth the mud.

## NAVIO

This is the perfect beach for the body surfer in you. Navio is not only a stunning beach, immortalized in the film *Lord of the Flies*, but it has very playful waves for those that enjoy an afternoon of fun body surfing. On the left side of the beach there is a small cave. After 3pm it becomes a beautiful grotto with the sun reflecting off the water. Navio is inside of the Sunbay preserve, but the dirt road to get you there is extremely challenging. Heavy rains can make the trek impassable. It's deserted most of the time, but on Sunday afternoons impromptu volleyball is a tradition.

## PLAYA BASTIMENTO

This is a natural swimming pool created by fossilized coral. Most of the time the pool is tranquil and the water is warm. It's a great beach for walking, with lovely views of Culebra, our sister island to the north. It's perfect for watching a sunset while in the water. Beach glass seekers never leave here disappointed. It is located on the north side, east of Isabel II. After the Vieques Humane Society take the 1st possible left - a dirt road. It dead ends on Playa Bastimento.



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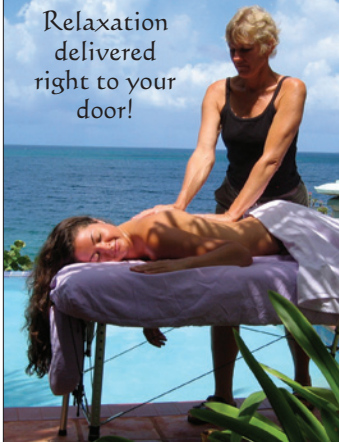
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FOR THE  
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ADVENTURE

## Playa Grande Sugar Mill Ruins

BY: TOM O'GRADY

While the beaches of Vieques are enough to fulfill your vision of a tropical vacation, don't forget there are some very cool things to do on the island's interior. Case in point - The Playa Grande Sugar Mill Tour is an amazing journey into the past, beautifully staged by the remnants and ruins of a working mill and presented by some extremely knowledgeable and equally enthusiastic guides. This is no stay in line, don't touch anything museum tour. This is a real, vines-in-your face, don't lose your guide immersion into a once vibrant world.

The history offered on the tour is eye-opening and the physical

ruins are stunning. The historical context stretches from the 16th century to the 20th, and along the way you'll hear about Queen Isabella of Spain, Emperor Napoleon of France, several Kings and Ministers of England, the first Viequense Governor - Don Teofilo Le Guillou - and some island sugar Dons (Gustavo and Benitez).

In this graveyard of a bygone enterprise the jungle dominates. But in, below and around it are constant glimpses of what once was. Clues to the past push up through the earth like spectral visions; a dirt-filled reservoir; a dry stone sluice; the ghost of a grinding wheel; soundless brick-arched tunnels and the vanquished, rusting skeletons of iron boilers and engines.

Also, a big part of the fun of this tour is what it causes you to imagine. Your guide will fill you in on all that used to be on the land around you,

like wealthy owners' mansions, workers accommodations, and the smell of sweet cane juice cooking.

Whether you're a history buff or a wanna-be Indiana Jones, you'll find yourself happily tripping through times and spaces that will stay in your memory. Your guides are knowledgeable and extremely familiar with the area and are as important to your experience as the ruins.

Tours are sponsored by the Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust. You can contact them for upcoming tours at [www.VCHT.org](http://www.VCHT.org) or 787-741-8850, or stop by their museum in Esperanza on the Malecón.



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# DRAFT BEER HERE

NICOLE VARADY

**MANY VISITORS TO VIEQUES, PRIMARILY BEER DRINKERS IN SEARCH OF A FROSTY PINT, ASK WHY DRAUGHT (DRAFT) BEER ISN'T AVAILABLE IN THE NUMEROUS BARS AND RESTAURANTS ON OUR ISLAND.**

\*\*\*\*\*

## HERE'S THE ANSWER.

It is available, with great limitation. Tin Box is currently the only provider of draft beer in Vieques. Nitrogen gas, a component of dispensing draft beers, is prohibited from being transported on the ferry to Vieques. Additionally, Glycol, which is used to keep the beer lines cool, cannot be obtained on Vieques. Not to be discouraged, Tin Box Owner Mikey Duffy sought out Vieques resident Arnaud Eckhaut, a former restaurateur and sommelier from France. Both Duffy and Eckhaut built and installed a European-style, in-line beer cooler on the premises. Eckhaut designed the system himself using a hybrid of a European recirculation tank and pump coupled with Glycol lines, minus the Glycol. Standard CO<sub>2</sub> pushes the beer through the lines from the keg to the tap. The crux of the challenge is getting the beer from the keg to the tap while keeping it cold. If a proper temperature isn't maintained mold will grow in the lines, never mind the warm beer! To avoid these hazards, Eckhaut and Duffy installed an English recirculation tank and pump and used Glycol lines to insulate the beer lines using ice cold water. This system successfully keeps the beer chilled as it travels to the tap. The design does not require the use of nitrogen gas or glycol, and is the only one of its kind in Vieques and mainland Puerto Rico. The main tank and pump were sourced from England via a supplier in Florida, and all the connectors and quick-release fittings were imported from the States. No small undertaking; both Mikey and Arnaud spent many hours crawling around the underbelly of Tin Box to provide a necessary component of enjoying island-time; cold beer on tap! You can give a nod to their efforts as you enjoy your chilly brew.

### And, for your additional information:

In many tap beer systems Nitrogen gas is used in combination with CO<sub>2</sub> to carbonate beer, and also utilized in many

systems to push the beer through the lines. On the main island of Puerto Rico The Old Harbor Brewery in San Juan was the only source of this at one time. (Unofficially, there are about 4 or 5 other sources now on the mainland.) Ferry restrictions not being an issue, many establishments will not undertake the sizeable project of designing, building and maintaining this type of system since there aren't many resources available to support them (think installation, repair, parts).

Per Arnaud, Mikey's project was delayed for nearly a year as there was rumor of a technician or designer in Puerto Rico from the mainland who specialized in these types of systems. As it happened, this person did not exist, so they were left to their own devices. Tin Box has been known to feature IPAs, lagers from Puerto Rican breweries such as Old Harbor Brewery, and more familiar providers from the States such as Abita Brewing Company of New Orleans and Bell's Brewery of Michigan. Up to four varieties of beer can be readily available and selections usually change weekly.

### Just so you know:

Despite the minimal availability of draught beer in Puerto Rico, Medalla Light, Puerto Rico's beer, is available on tap on the main island. Let us know where you find it.





# THE HORSES OF VIEQUES

*as much a part of the island  
as the sand and sea*

---

After arriving on Vieques your first encounter may very well be with a horse. Strolling on beaches or grazing by the side of the roads and the grounds of your guesthouse, these majestic animals have free reign of the island.

---

## **“Are the horses on Vieques wild?”**

is a common question posed daily by visitors. The answer is not a simple yes or no, and will strike up an age-old debate regarding their status. For the most part, the horses are not wild, but many of their owners do not keep them on their land. When the horse is needed the owner will go and find it. Generally horses will return to grazing land time after time, and families and herds stick together, following the same routes to their spots. The owner will often know where to look. Plus, there is an informal network of communication. On a small island everyone knows everyone - and their horse. And most of the horses are branded.



Allowing the horses to roam freely offers the island visitor idyllic scenes of a time when cars and traffic were less prevalent. The sight of a watchful mare guiding her wobbly foal along a dirt road, or frisky, saddleless horses at play against white sand and blue sea evokes feelings of nature’s tranquility. On the other hand, seeing a horse injured and without proper medical care or suffering from malnutrition during droughts, evokes sadness and frustration. The challenge for Vieques horse owners and residents is to find the balance.

Daily life on Vieques is simpatico with these magnificent and docile creatures, as much an integral part of the island as the sand and sea. They are still a main mode of transportation for some locals. You’ll see many Viequenses riding, sometimes bareback, headed to the local store or human watering hole. Additionally, there are several horseback riding businesses offering beach rides on both coasts of the island as well as interior rides through the streets and up the mountainsides. Many visitors fulfill a bucket list

item by riding into a beach sunset.

Horses play a role in the social outings as well. A cabalgata, or “group ride”, is not unlike the gathering of motorcycle enthusiasts who organize bike ral-





RIVER KARMEN PHOTOGRAPHY

lies. On Vieques a cabalgata is a procession of horses and riders who assemble in a designated place then ride to another location, usually stopping at establishments along the way for refreshments and socializing. These gatherings can happen anytime throughout the year and typically do so close to holidays. The horse community of Vieques is a very tight-knit group with an established network of word-of-mouth communications. The events are well-attended, and you may spot one during your visit here. Usually, the men and women riders are dressed in typical western riding gear; boots, hats and jeans. The horses are also dressed, featuring beautiful and unique tack including custom saddles and decorated cinches and breast collars.

Amazonas de Vieques, an all-female group of about 40 riders get together each month to ride. Dania Ayala, the club's founder and president, says they have strict rules for how their horses are treated and there are no running contests. The women wear reflective shirts bearing the message "no es un deporte es Nuestra Pasion" (It is not a sport it's our passion).

For the many more horses not carefully tended to, the challenge is great. The herds are growing, bringing greater equine health and space issues. Recent periods of drought and increased tourism on the island puts them at greater risk. Penny Miller, founding member of the Vieques Humane Society in 1986 (along with Christina Mitchell, Royce and Selenia Bleth and Kitty Ketterma), has served the animals of Vieques with selfless dedication, especially the horses. She is concerned about the welfare of the herds on the island. "Almost everyone owns a horse, but is not necessarily responsible for the horse if it is in need of care. The responsibility to survive [then] lies with the animal, not with the owner. This is the problem."

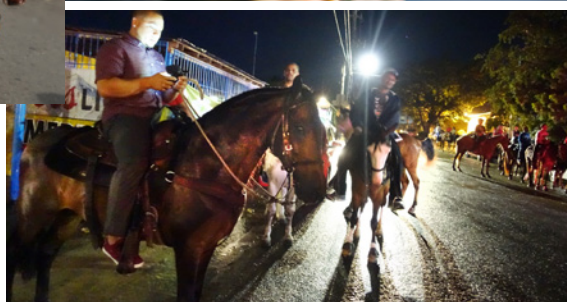
Fortunately, efforts are in place to improve conditions with an exciting, steady change towards education and the proper care of the horses.

Sargeant Dennis Ramon has established the Club de Caballistas Inc. de Vieques, a horse group with a focus on children and organized activities to keep the kids and the horses safe.

Johny "Wachu" Colon is hoping to have a horse camp for kids in the near future and is very concerned about humane education for horses on the island. He is working on organizing monthly horse events like cabalgatas or beach outings. The goal of these events



SARA LEE



KATIE ANDERSON



SANDRA MUDGE

is to keep the kids on a horse and out of trouble. Colon has been around horses all of his life (“I’ve had a horse since I was in my mama’s belly”), and it’s his passion to educate others about their care. “If [the kids] are with a group of people who care about them and care about their horses, [they] are bound to have fun and learn something at the same time.”

A big difference has been made by JUNTOS (Spanish for together), a program begun in 2013 by River Karmen that has introduced privately funded humane education into the school system of Vieques. JUNTOS employee Adora Negrón teaches the idea of responsible pet ownership, kind treatment toward animals and the prevention of cruelty.

Juntos Vieques, Inc. is now embarking on a long term project to create on-going horse registration and education clinics for owners thanks to a generous donation from Marion Fisher and Gallery Galleon. The purpose of these clinics is to develop a process of committed ownership and stewardship of the island’s horses. Registered horses will receive a micro-chip for monitoring purposes inserted by a veterinarian, an important first step that will hopefully lead to mandatory registration and proof of ownership in the future.



SARA LEE



## PASO FINO HORSES

# taka taka taka taka

## THE HORSES WITH THE FINE WALK

Paso Fino, meaning “fine step”, is a breed of horse brought to the Caribbean from Spain. Puerto Ricans are extremely proud of these horses known for their fine step and their “brio” or fire and energy. They are revered for their smooth, steady, four-beat gait producing a rapid footfall, unbroken rhythm and little forward movement. The two main groups of Paso Finos - Puerto Rican and Columbian (now routinely inter-bred) - developed independently from each other but share Spanish ancestors. This magnificent breed was cultivated over a period of 500 years on Puerto Rico and is a blend of the Barb, Spanish Jennet, and Andalusian horse. Breeding over the years focused on their gait, which has produced a fine, rapid step that gives such a comfortable ride that their riders barely move. On Vieques, there used to be competitions where the riders balanced a glass of water on their hats and rode down the main street of Isabel II without spilling a drop.

If you see a Paso Fino horse perform it is difficult to believe that it hasn’t been trained to move this way. The gait comes naturally to the breed, and foals even exhibit the gift of the four beat rhythm from birth. Training can refine the step and, as with any athlete, exercise, stretching and refinement of movements will make the horse more efficient and faster.

Enrique Morales, better known as “Kike”, has owned Paso Finos since the 90s. He states, “It is getting harder to own a Paso Fino horse mostly because of the cost. The elite breed are extremely valuable horses, and the cost of vitamins, care, a trainer, stable, and veterinarians is prohibitively expensive. On Vieques there is no large animal veterinarian or farrier to take care of hooves and shoes, and there are limited working stables, trainers or competitive events.”

Kike’s horses are training with Carlos Conde, Jr. in Puerto Rico. The Conde family of Vieques has owned and trained Paso Fino horses since the 1960s starting with the grandfather Carlos Conde. The trade has been passed on through three generations and now his son and their sons are professional riders and professional trainers of some of the finest Paso Fino horses in Puerto Rico and the world.



Another name synonymous with horses on Vieques is Papo Lopez. Papo started riding horses when he was very young but has learned to train them since he was 13. He went to seminars in Columbia and Peru and took college courses on stable management and training to earn his training certificate. His mentor, Cunda Figueroa taught him, **“controlling a horse is like playing the piano, you use all your fingers. And the slightest movement of your little pinky finger will tell the horse something...tell that horse what you want it to do.”**

There are occasionally Paso Fino competitions on Vieques but more often in Puerto Rico. If you have the opportunity to go to one and witness the proud and fiery Paso Finos in action it will be a memory of a lifetime.

# dream on



## SUSPENDED COMFORT

beckons Susi Higgins Walker on a daily basis. Susi's husband, Raymond, a boat builder, constructed this bed to mimic the gentle sway of sleeping on a boat at anchor. The couple, originally both from Maine, met here in Vieques 20 years ago, bought property, and built their island home in Isabel II.

KELLY THOMPSON

## ISLAND STYLE

## DAY DREAMING

takes on a whole new meaning in a breezy outdoor bed on the terrace of Mark Gallant and Michael O'Hagen's home "Casa La Vista" located in Los Chivos. With a spectacular view of the southern coast of Vieques and the Bioluminescent Bay, who would ever want to go inside?



# SIDDHIA HUTCHINSON FINE ART GALLERY

## 12X12

Our annual  
Vieques Humane Society  
Benefit Art Auction

**Thursday, March 10, 2016  
6PM-8PM**

Photo: Jim Stott

**Please join us for one of Vieques' most inspiring and original fundraising events.**

Your friends, neighbors and noted artists have donated original 12" x 12" artworks of all kinds for auction.

Artworks will be on display for silent auction March 1 through March 10,  
with a grand finale exhibition and reception closing the bidding on the evening of March 10th.



The 12X12 show has several goals: to raise money and awareness for the VHSAR, create a unique community event, and offer an artistic showcase for the limitless creativity present on Vieques. "For many of us who live, work or visit Vieques, helping improve the plight of the island's unwanted and uncared for animals is one of our most passionate causes. For those of us here at the gallery, art is another passion - we're combining the two!" states gallery founder Siddhia Hutchinson.

Building on the great success of the past six 12X12 events, last year's auction raised in excess of \$25,000 for VHSAR.

The money raised goes to the VHSAR general fund, which covers the expenses of operating the shelter: food, medicine, water, electricity, staff, and veterinary costs for the shelter animals.

For more information visit [www.siddhiahutchinsongallery.com/exhibitions](http://www.siddhiahutchinsongallery.com/exhibitions)

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# FOR THE LOVE OF SATOS

MARY ANNE MATHER

## Sato = Puerto Rican slang for a mutt or mixed-breed dog

A Vieques island vacation promises sunny beaches, sandy toes, and something extra. Sato sightings everywhere! You'll encounter friendly and often hungry satos on streets, beaches, and near hotels and restaurants. These highly intelligent, friendly, and often needy "beach doggies" know just how to reach out with an irresistible spirit you can't help but notice. They make excellent, loving, and loyal companions, so get ready to fall in love!

In spite of their endearing qualities many satos are homeless, with few prospects of finding homes on a small island. But there's hope. Several organizations work hard to address animal overpopulation and abandonment precipitated by a combination of economic, social, and cultural factors. Juntos of Vieques delivers humane education programs, Vieques Island Animal Sanctuary shelters abandoned animals, and Vieques Humane Society (VHS) runs a low-cost clinic, shelter, and active adoption program. In 2015 VHS found forever homes for 97 dogs. Incorporated in 1987, the Humane Society is the island's oldest 501c3 non-profit dedicated to the prevention of animal cruelty on Vieques. Twelve staff and a part-time vet maintain the welfare of over 100 shelter animals.

While you're on Vieques, stop by the shelter. VHS (787.741.0209) is open to visitors Friday and Saturday from 10am to 2pm. For a really heartwarming experience get close-and-personal with the dogs on Fridays with a beach walk (10am -1pm). You can also follow the shelter's good work on Facebook at Vieques Humane Society and Vieques Island Adoptable Dogs.

Don't be surprised how you feel after meeting the satos. You won't be the first to open your heart, and maybe your home. How wonderful to return from vacation with a sato in your heart, or your carry-on bag. One VHS supporter shared, "I came to Vieques for a tan and went home with a sato!" Adoption is simple, and you'll leave Vieques with your new friend and a lifetime island connection. Think about it, and enjoy the satos.



## TAKING A PET HOME

JANE CHADWICK

When the doe eyed, four legged, fur covered love of your life wanders into your life, no matter the obstacles, you just can't leave him behind. And, you don't have to! There are just four things that you will need to get that buddy home with you.

### 1 THE HEALTH CERTIFICATE

(If you decide to adopt an animal from the Humane Society, this step is already done)

You will need to have a vet exam and rabies shot. The doctor will vaccinate the animal and complete the health certificate and issue a rabies certificate. There are two veterinary clinics on Vieques and many on the main island that can help with this.

**Vieques Humane Society,** Tuesday & Wednesday (clinic days), 787-741-0209

**Clinica de Animales, VQS,** Mondays 787-741-1826

**Dr. Delgado, Fajardo** 787-860-5237

**Dr. Santiago, Loiza** 787-256-5158

**PR Veterinary Clinic, San Juan,** 787-725-4786, 787-742-0336

**Vet 24/7, San Juan,** 24 hours 787-751-3737

**Banfield Animal Hospital, San Juan** 787-751-4570, 787-273-2011

### 2 TRAVEL KENNEL

**Soft sided /** in cabin transport 20 lbs or less  
**Hard kennels /** cargo travel

FOR SALE AT:

**Vieques Humane Society**

**Centro Commercial Vieques (next to the Post Office)**

**Nales Hardware, Vieques**

**Petsmart, Fajardo**

**Walmart, several locations**

Note: Two water/food cups secured to the kennel door are required in cargo. Be aware that most come with only one or none. Label your kennel with a sharpie!

### 3 TRAVEL TO SAN JUAN

**Ferry •** Kennels are required

**Vieques Airlink •** 30lbs or less • kennels for rent

**Air Flamenco •** Medium / small kennel must fit in cargo • no weight limit

**Cape Air •** medium/small kennels

### 4 FLIGHT HOME

Common airlines with service from San Juan International.

**American Airlines.** Aa.com 800-981-4757 800-433-7300 800-227-4622 (cargo) Weight limit 100 pounds. Temperature restrictions on cargo. Breed Restrictions!!!

**United** 800-864-8331 united.com • In cabin from passenger check in. Cargo from cargo terminal. No weight or temperature restrictions. There are breed restrictions with respect to kennel size and reinforced crate requirements.

**Jet Blue** jetblue.com 800-538-2583 • In cabin only. Weight limit 20lbs.

**Delta Airlines** delta.com 800-352-2746 • In cabin only.

**Spirit Airlines** spiritair.com 801-401-2222 In cabin only.

**Airtran** airtran.com 800-435-9792 In cabin only

**HOTELS IN PUERTO RICO ALLOWING PETS.**

**Sheraton Old San Juan** 787-721-5100,

**Convention District** 787-993-3500

**Coqui Inn Isla Verde** 787-726-4330

**Wind Chimes Ocean Park** 787-727-4153

**Casa del Caribe Condado** 787-722-7139

**Verdanza Hotel Isla Verde** 787-253-9000



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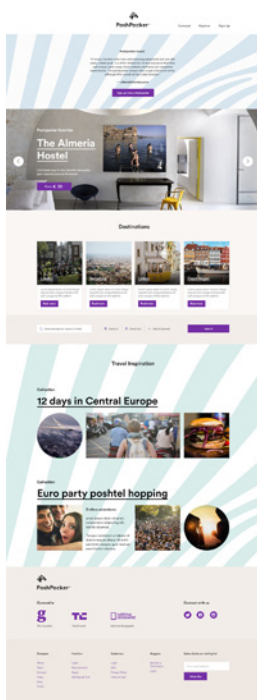
KELLY THOMPSON AND TOM O'GRADY

## Reach, Learn, Create, Mentor

TANIA CRUZ AND ANNA KOJZAR



PoshPacker's new booking platform design. New design, new features, new branding.

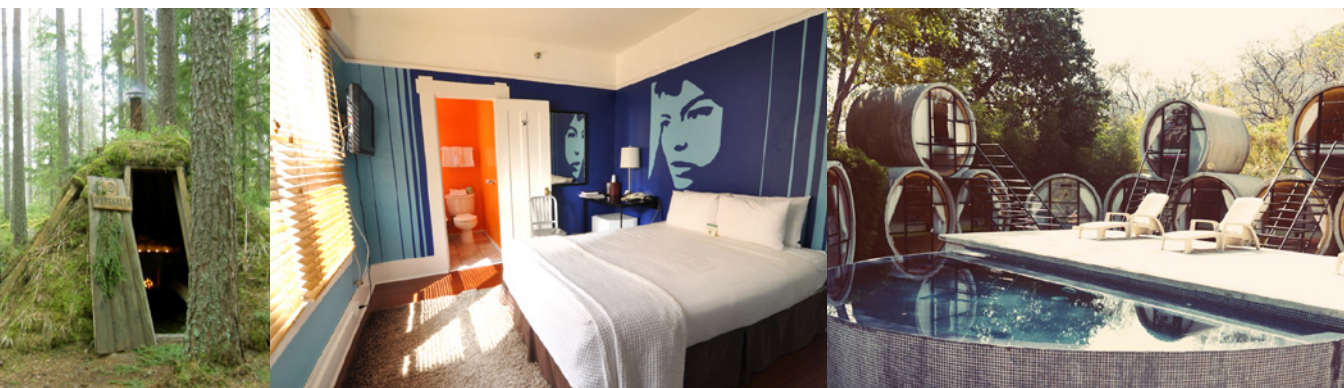


For most visitors, Vieques is an escape from the fast moving world of business and technology, a place to relax and set aside the challenges of making your way in the world. But when you are born here the off-island world looks very different. For some Viequenses it is a place of possibilities and challenges, of opportunity and growth. That's what Tania Cruz Morales began seeing a short thirty years ago growing up in the barrio of Santa Maria with her four brothers. The quest to reach, to learn, to create and to mentor came quickly for Tania as she worked her way through the restaurant business during her teenage years on the island, then on to college, observing the tourism business from many angles; hospitality to eco-business to entrepreneurial training, always with a desire to share what she'd learned by mentoring others. As a twenty-one year old project coordinator for the Vieques Youth Leadership Initiative, now known as Reach for Success, Tania brought her passion and energy back to Vieques each weekend knowing that what she was learning was as important as what she was giving back.

Now, still playing the role of student and mentor, Tania and her partner, Anna Cozjar, are experiencing the heady thrill of growing an international business in the ever-changing hospitality industry. Poshpacker, as their website proclaims, "is a curated booking site for finding cool places to stay that are also affordable." Tania and Anna met in Barcelona when Anna, a Washington, D.C. resident and Maryland native, was finishing her MBA in Global Entrepreneurship. They found it difficult while traveling to find accommodations that were economical yet comfortable and unique at the same time. After much research and self-training they found mentors and funding in the international business community. Soon after Poshpacker.com hit the internet and now is growing, providing travelers unique but always affordable accommodations all over the world.



Tania and Anna taking a break on Vieques.



Vieques Insider spoke with Tania and Anna earlier this month about their business and Tania's experience growing up on Vieques.

**VI: What do you think set the spark in you for world travel and entrepreneurship?**

Tania: My work with the Vieques Youth Initiative, now known as Reach for Success. This was the key for me. The program had many people involved that were not from Vieques so I was able to talk to people from all over and with many different skill sets. Living on an island without knowing of all the options in the world is very limiting. So I took advantage of every opportunity to talk to these people and learn from them. They opened my eyes to the options available to me outside of the island... as well as on it. The other key was learning English and studying the hospitality industry. I then got a job waiting tables to pay my way through college.

**VI: Did you have any sense at that time that what you were being exposed to was something you could build on to end up where you are now?**

Tania: I think this was a moment in my life where I understood that if I want to do something for real I can. I put the limits. During this time I was getting very inspired to start something new. So, I started an eco-tourism program [on the big island]. It was inspiring college students to go and see the nature of Puerto Rico. And during that time is when I understood that there was a lot of passion in me in starting new initiatives and gathering people together, and I saw that as something I could do well.

**VI: If you could create a one-term course for youth on Vieques what would be you think that course would be about?**

Tania: I would create a business class, at the low-level. I see a lot of opportunities with the tourism industry. I think there are a lot of creative people in Vieques. When you grow up in Vieques

you have an advantage. You have people around you from Argentina, the U.S., you have people from Spain, you have people from all over the world. I think that's a great opportunity because you're exposed to different languages. [Also,] I think what's missing is understanding these opportunities from a business perspective.

**VI: Any business advice to young people on Vieques?**

Tania: People who are young can really learn how to work well. Find mentors. Like I got the opportunity [working at El Quenepo] and I made a lot of mistakes but I learned. And the people who are moving to Vieques who are starting businesses need to give the people the opportunity and understand the community. [Also,] take initiative. Nothing will come to you, you have to go get it. And don't be scared to try new things. This is the right spot to start a business because there is so much potential. Try something. If it fails it doesn't matter. Try something else.

**VI: Any advice regarding technology, the internet?**

Tania: So many people use technology and just waste their time. The internet is such a tool for learning. You can learn just about anything online and teach yourself something new. Or you can seriously waste a lot of precious time. For example, I see many people who spend hours and hours on Facebook just browsing and looking at other people's things. However, you could put that interest to work and learn how to become a social media manager for a company, small business, or to become experts at using Facebook and create your own business. There are many opportunities with technology, which are high paying jobs.

Techstars, a global organization that provides funding and real world

mentoring for entrepreneurial startups positioned Tania and Anna in Berlin, Germany for the last four months where they have been working with other successful entrepreneurs.

**VI: So what's next?**

Tania: Our plan next is fundraising. We plan to move back at the end of January and are considering Puerto Rico, Virginia or New York as a base. We're not going to stay in Germany. This was just because we were part of Techstars, and they are one of the most prestigious entrepreneurial programs in the world. It is a really competitive program. You can compare this to getting into Harvard or Stanford, and they take only ten companies per semester. A lot of companies have been very, very successful from this program. We have been seeing great success with our business these past 4 months, with a 10% week on week increase in registered users, and have hit a 1.5% conversion rate (industry avg is 2-3%).

**VI: So this is no 9 to 5, meet you for cocktails at 5:30 every day kind of business, right?**

Tania and Anna both laugh at the question. Tania: No, this will be like 7 in the morning to midnight. **Whatever it takes. I mean, I don't even see my job as work. I never think I'm working. I'm always following my dream. If I need to work 14 hours a day I don't care. We're building a dream. And when you're doing that you just work with so much passion. I'm doing what I really want to be doing.**



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787-614-2399**

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 CAROL MOLINELLI 787-741-2974  
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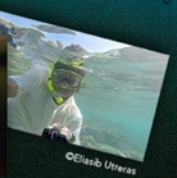
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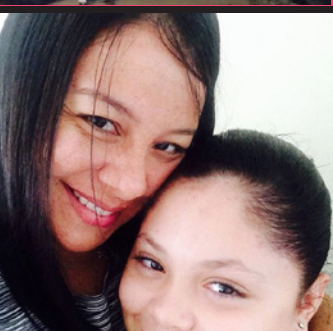
VIEQUES, PUERTO RICO

[WWW.VIEQUESINSIDER.COM](http://WWW.VIEQUESINSIDER.COM)

**VIEQUES INSIDER TEAMED UP WITH CAPE AIR FOR A INSTAGRAM CONTEST. A WINNER WAS SELECTED FROM A RANDOM DRAWING ON JAN 15TH.**

The winner of that contest received two round trip tickets from San Juan to Vieques on Cape Air. Thanks for playing! And the winner is.... Christina Boggs from Lexington, KY! >>>







# WHERE TO DRINK & DINE

To avoid having to wait at a restaurant or worse yet, not getting a table, please make reservations.

## AGUCATE "A CATERED AFFAIR" 787-615-2320

Great A 6 course prix fixe dinner in a Hix designed hilltop villa. Thursday nights. Reservations required.

## ARENAMAR CAFE 787-239-7771

Great food, vegetarian options, Frappes & Frozen drinks. Beach delivery. Located at SunBay.

## AURORA'S CHICKEN & GRILL (FORMERLY CHICKEN KING-JUST MOVED NEXT DOOR!) 787-741-3002

Roasted, BBQ, fried, and rotisserie chicken, hand dipped ice-cream, authentic local food and more! On 201 across from Nales Hardware store. Open everyday 10:30 am- 8:30pm

## BANANAS BEACH BAR AND GRILL 787-741-8700

Open air, ocean view with an eclectic menu and social atmosphere. Open 7 days a week Lunch & Dinner 11:00am to 10:00pm, Daily happy hour.

## BELLY BUTTONS 787-741-3336

Open everyday breakfast & lunch 9am-3pm; Dinner Wed-Sun 3-9:30 Weekly specials! Call for schedule. Beach Restaurant with the island's best ribs and sandwiches! Ocean views on the quiet side of the Malecón. Island vibe.

## BIEKES BISTRO 787-741-6381

Caribbean Style Bistro with Puerto Rican cuisine. Mon-Sat 11am-9:30pm, Sun 5-9:30pm

## BLUE MOON BAR & GRILL

at the Blue Horizon Boutique Resort 787-741-3318

Circular artistic hand painted bar. A great place to meet! Breakfast, lunch, or dinner! Open 365 days.

## BUEN PROVECHO 787-529-7316

Open 7 days Sun 8-2, Mon 8-4, Tues-Sat 8-6, Deli, Market, Café, Wine & Spirits. Breakfast, lunch and occasional pop-up dinners. Next to Siddhia Hutchinson Gallery in Isabel II.

## CAFE DEL MAR

787-248-2097 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, fresh bread and pastries, gourmet coffee, espresso, tapas, cocktails, chef's specials. Open everyday 8am-close.

## CARAMBOLA AT THE BLUE HORIZON BOUTIQUE RESORT 787-741-3318

Breakfast 7:00am - 12:00pm Lunch 12 -pm - 3 -pm Dinner 3:00pm - 10pm Great local and international dishes served in Caribbean fashion. Open 365 days. Beautiful, unique setting overlooking the ocean.

## CONUCO 787-741-2500

Dinner Tues - Sat 5:30 - 9:30pm Lunch Tues - Fri 11-2 Cocina Puertorriqueña. Authentic Puerto Rican food in a warm elegant atmosphere. Located in Isabel II across from Banco Popular.

## COQUI FIRE CAFÉ 787-741-0401

Mon - Fri 5-9pm Gourmet Mexican food, reservations a must. Isabel II

## EL SOMBRERO VIEJO BAR & LIQUOR STORE 787-741-2416

Everyday 12noon-after midnight. Local bar, hang out and wine cellar.

## HORTA'S BBQ 787-614-2399

Puerto Rican Home Cookin' BBQ and authentic food. BYOB. Open every day 4-10pm On rt. 200

## EL BLOK 787-741-6020

Open everyday, Breakfast 8-11am, Lunch 11am-3pm, Dinner, 6-10:00 pm- Caribbean flavors with locally sourced products. Mesquite fired grilled-whole fish, beef & pork porterhouse. Offering whole roasted chickens and a large selection of

smaller dishes. Rooftop Sunset Cocktails 4-6pm

## LA VISTA 787-741-8700

Rooftop, Oceanfront, Sunset Dining. Open Dec 15th, Tues-Fri 4:30-9:30 pm, Located above Bananas.

## L'MIRADOR at the Blue Horizon Boutique Resort 787-741-3318 OPEN 365 DAYS

New Tapas Menu Fri, Sat, Sun 5pm, Specials, Thai, Vegetarian and Vegan specials. Fun, lively setting with ocean view.

## MAR AZUL 787-741-3400

Fri-Mon 10am-close, Tues-Thurs 3pm-12am, Quality Pub Food / Late Night Snacks. Fri Fish Fry. Tues \$12.99 dinners Awesome sunsets and cocktails. Karaoke Sat. Isabel II up from the ferry.

## NEXT COURSE 787-741-1028

Caribbean lobster, local market fish, house dry aged beef, home made pastas. A menu that encompasses American cuisine with Caribbean flair. Reservations requested. Open Fri-Wed 5:30-10pm

## RINCON DEL SABOR 939-358-1783

Authentic Puerto Rican food. Daily lunch specials starting at \$6.95 Great mofongo. Kiosk truck next to gas station on 200. Tues-Fri, 10:30am-5pm

## SUBWAY 787-741-1049

Ocean front near ferry in Isabel II

## TAVERNA 787-438-1100

Open at 5:30 closed Tues. and Wed. Italian restaurant and pizzeria.

## TRADEWINDS 787-741-8666

Fresh Seafood, Steaks, Pasta, Paella, and more! Lobster specials nightly. Happy hour 5-6:30pm Dinner 5:30-9:30 Nightly Breakfast 7:30-11:30 and Lunch 11:30-2pm Overlooking the ocean on the Malecón Esperanza.

## TSUNAMI BAR & GRILL 787-438-1049

Pitchers, beer towers, wine, craft beer, & delicious food. Ocean-front in Isabel II near ferry.

# WHAT TO DO SPECIAL WEEKLY EVENTS

## WHAT TO DO SPECIAL WEEKLY EVENTS

### EVERYDAY

Happy Hour, Mar Azul, 5-7pm

Happy Hour, Trade Winds Restaurant, 5-6:30pm

Happy Hour, Tin Box \$2 Tacos 4-6pm

Sunset Happy Hour Arenamar Sunbay Café

Happy Hour, Bananas

Yoga W Hotel 8:15am

### BY APPOINTMENT

TRX training, 315.440.0791

### MONDAY

Beach Yoga with Valerie Sunbay Beach, 9:30am \$10 all levels

Vinasa Yoga w/Maureen Hix Island House Yoga Pavilion, 9:30am

Plein Air Pastel Class with Siddhia Hutchinson, 8am-11am, \$45. Sign up at the Gallery or call 787-741-1343

Still Life Studio Class with Siddhia Hutchinson, 1pm-4pm, \$45. Sign up at the Gallery or call 787-741-1343

### TUESDAY-SUN

Vinasa Yoga w/Jennifer Hix Island House Yoga Pavilion, 9:30am

### TUESDAY

Farmer's Market, Placita Reyes, INT RT 200/201, 8am-4pm

\$12.99 Dinners, Mar Azul 5-9pm

Radio Vieques-Better Together, English language show 7pm, Tune in to 90.1

### WEDNESDAY

Pilates with Linda, Sunbay Beach, 9:30am, \$10 donation

Happy Hour, Belly Buttons 3-7pm

Paella Night with Waldo Belly Buttons 6:30-8:30pm Reservations requested 787.741.3336

Seafood Gala, "Island Style" Fry and Broil, Trade Winds Restaurant, 5:30-9:30pm, Reservations 787.741.8666

### THURS-SAT

Tapas Night, L'Mirador Terrace, Blue Horizon Boutique Resort, 5pm

### THURSDAY

Beach Yoga with Valerie, Sunbay Beach, 9:30am, \$10 all levels

Happy Hour, Belly Buttons, 3-7pm

Belly Busting Dinners, Belly Buttons, 3-9:30pm, 787.741.3336

Bomba Class with Erika Esperanza Biblioteca Electronica, 7pm

Radio Vieques-Better Together, English language show 7pm, Tune in to 90.1

Thursday Tours, Vieques Conservation and Historical Trust, Check schedule on page 69

"A Catered Affair", 6 course Prix fixe dinner in a lovely hilltop Hix designed villa, \$65, see this weeks menu on facebook at A Catered Affair, Reservations required, call 787-615-2320

### FRIDAY

Farmer's Market, Placita Reyes, INT RT 200/201, 8am-4pm

Pizza Night, Blue Moon Bar, Blue Horizon Boutique Resort, 4-11pm, 787.741.3318

Live Music/Open Jam, Mar Azul 9pm-1am

Fish Fry, Mar Azul

Happy Hour, Belly Buttons 3-7pm

Belly Busting Dinners, Belly Buttons, 3-9:30pm, 787.741.3336

Lobster Specials, Trade Winds Restaurant, 5:30-9:30pm Reservations 787.741.8666

### SATURDAY

Farmer's Market, Esperanza, 8am-4pm

Pizza Night, Blue Moon Bar, Blue Horizon Boutique Resort, 4-11pm, 787.741.3318

Happy Hour, Belly Buttons 3-7pm

Belly Busting Dinners, Belly Buttons, 3-9:30pm, 787.741.3336

Karaoke Night, Mar Azul 9pm

### SUNDAY

Sunday Brunch Specials, Trade Winds Restaurant, 7:30am-2:30pm

Sunset Dance at Hector's by the Sea, 4-7pm, All welcome to come and boogie 787.741.1178

Paella Night, Trade Winds Restaurant, 5:30-9:30pm Reservations 787.741.8666

Happy Hour, Belly Buttons 3-7pm

Belly Busting Dinners, Belly Buttons, 3-9:30pm, 787.741.3336

Quaker Worship Group 10am Villa Borinquen 732.713.5047

### AA(ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS) 787 741 0639

**Mon. & Tues** • Open Mtg. 5:30pm Esperanza/ Bldg. behind the Trust-Malecon

**Weds** • 6pm Open Mtg. Behind Catholic Church / Isabel II

**Thurs.** • 8:30am Playa Gallito near the W (Gringo Beach) Open Mtg

**Fri.** • 6pm Closed Mtg. Behind Catholic Church Isabel II

**Sat. & Sun.** • 10:30am Open Mtg. Behind Catholic Church Isabel II

ALANON (Friends and Family of Alcoholics) 207.869.0925

**Weds.** • 9am Behind Catholic Church Isabel II

NA (Narcotics Anonymous) 508.873. 4576

**Thurs.** • 6pm Behind Catholic Church Isabel II



STEVE SIMONSEN

# VIEQUES VISITORS AND FELLOW ISLANDERS

These events have been carefully planned all year with you in mind.  
Please come out and enjoy them!

## FEBRUARY 2016

**FEB 1-14**, Four Women of the Fourth Dimension Art Exhibition at the Fort - Fuerte Conde de Mirasol, Wed-Sun 9am-5pm

**FRI, FEB 5**, Live Music, Belly Buttons 7-9:30pm

**WED, FEB 10**, "Rock and Roll Party", Navy League, Hector's by the Sea, 6pm, Members \$30 - Non-Members \$35

**SUN, FEB 14**, Carambola Restaurant 10th Anniversary Celebration and Valentine's Day Dinner, Blue Horizon Boutique Resort, Live Music by Los Intocables, Two Seatings: 6pm and 8pm, \$45/person, Reservations required, 787.741.3318

**SUN, FEB 14**, Valentine's Day Dinner, Specials by Chef David, Trade Winds Restaurant, 787.741.8666

**SUN, FEB 14**, Valentine's Day Dinner, El Quenepo, Reservations 787.741.1215 (closed Mon, Feb 15)

**WED, FEB 17**, Dinner Dance Fundraiser for COREFI, Punta Mulás Lighthouse, 6pm, Tickets are available at the door and at local retailers, Call 787-433-0413 for more information

**THURS, FEB 18**, Seafood Night, Mar Azul, 5-9pm

**THURS, FEB 18** Exhibit opening at Siddhia Hutchinson Fine Art Gallery, Christine Treibert "Fallen Flora, Vieques" 6-8pm

**THURS, FEB 25**, Vieques Humane Society (VHS) Bingo Night Benefit, La Cava, Doors open 5PM. Bingo 6PM, Call Val for info: 787.690.0890

**FRI, FEB 26**, Live Music, Belly Buttons, 7-9:30pm

## MARCH 2016

**MARCH 3RD, 4TH, 7TH, 8TH** Self-Defense class for women over age of 13, free, Fuerte Conde de Mirasol, 10am and 3:30 pm, for more information call Lizzie Weeden, 734.330.9275

**WED, MARCH 9**, Gira Circo Fest 2016, Plaza Pública in Isabel II, Frente a la Alcaldía, 6pm, Free

**THURS, MARCH 10**, Vieques Humane Society 12x12 Benefit Art Auction Gala, 6-8PM, Siddhia Hutchinson Gallery, Isabel II. 787.741.1343, Free

**FRI, MAR 11**, Live Music, Belly Buttons 7-9:30pm

**SAT, MAR 12**, Navy League Pig Roast, Sunbay Beach, 12 noon, Members \$30 - Non-members \$35, Children \$15, Tickets available at local retailers, 787.433.0413

**SUN, MAR 13**, Musical Voyage thru the Americas, Music by The Duo Alma, Cello, Violin and Voice, Fuerte Conde de Mirasol (the Fort), 1pm

**THURS, MAR 17**, St. Patrick's Day Dinner, Traditional Corned Beef & Cabbage w/ Soda Bread, Trade Winds Restaurant, 5:30-9:30pm, Reservations 787.741.8666

**THURS, MAR 17**, St. Patrick's Day, Corned Beef & Cabbage-Irish Stew, Mar Azul 1-9pm

**MON, MAR 21**, MOFONGO UNLEASHED, Dance Party to benefit Vieques Humane Society, Music by Mofongo. Location: Hector's by the Sea, 5:30-9pm, appetizers, dancing, sunset cocktails, Call Val for info, 787.690.0890

**SAT, MAR 26**, Live Music, Belly Buttons, 7-9:30pm

**SUN, MAR 27**, Easter Sunday Brunch, Carambola Restaurant, Blue Horizon Boutique Resort, 7am-2pm, Reservations suggested, 787.741.3318

**SUN, MAR 27**, Easter Sunday Dinner, Specials by Chef David, Trade Winds Restaurant, 5:30-9:30pm, Reservations 787.741.8666

**THURS, MAR 31**, Prime Rib Night, Mar Azul, 5-9pm

## APRIL 2016

**THURS, APR 21**, Country Night, Southern Food/Country Music, Mar Azul 5-9pm

**FRI, APR 22**, Earth Day

**THURS, APR 28**, Bingo Night, Benefiting the Vieques Humane Society, La Cava, Doors Open: 5pm Bingo, 6pm, Call Val for info 787.690.0890

Vieques  
**Rotary**  
Club



**MON, FEB 1** - Rotary Club monthly dinner meeting at 7pm, restaurant TBD, check [rotaryvieques.com](http://rotaryvieques.com) for location

**TUES, MARCH 1** - Vieques Rotary Club 4th Annual Bash in Esperanza, 6pm - details and tickets available on [rotaryvieques.com](http://rotaryvieques.com)

**MON, MARCH 7** - Rotary Club monthly dinner meeting, restaurant TBD at 7pm, check [rotaryvieques.com](http://rotaryvieques.com) for location

**MON, APRIL 4** - Rotary Club monthly dinner meeting, restaurant TBD at 7pm, check [rotaryvieques.com](http://rotaryvieques.com) for location



## Navy League Pig Roast

Helping US Coast Guard & VQS Community

**Saturday, March 12, 2016 - Sunbay  
West End Gazebo 12:00pm**

*Bring Lawn Chairs & Drinks*

**Music, Raffle Tickets & Silent Auction  
\$35 Members / \$40 Nonmembers / \$15 Children**

Tickets Purchased at La Lanchita, Funky Beehive, & Vieques Flowers & Gifts

**732-433-0413**



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THE VCHT is sponsoring a special free series of "Trust Talks". Please watch for announcements on Facebook or visit the event calendar at [www.vcht.com](http://www.vcht.com)

**THURS, FEB 4,** Playa Grande Tour, 9-11:30am, meet at VCHT, \$35

**SAT, FEB 6,** VCHT Annual Dinner - "Celebrating Vieques"; at El Blok, in Esperanza, 6 p.m., Reservations at the Trust, 787-741-8550; single tickets are \$150, tables from \$1,000.

**THURS, FEB 11,** Bird Walk, 7:30-10am, meet at VCHT, \$20

**SAT, FEB 13,** Architectural Walking Tour, Isabel II, 9-11am, meet at Plaza in Isabel II, \$25

**THURS, FEB 18,** Playa Grande Tour, 9-11:30am, meet at VCHT, \$35

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22,** VCHT ANNUAL MEETING at VCHT, 4:00 p.m.

**THURS, FEB 25,** Bird Walk, 7:30-10am, meet at VCHT, \$20

**THURS, MAR 3,** Playa Grande Tour, 9-11:30am, meet at VCHT, \$35

**THURS, MAR 10,** House Tour, Call for time, meet at VCHT, \$45

**THURS, MAR 17,** Playa Grande Tour, 9-11:30am, meet at VCHT, \$35

**THURS, MAR 21,** Playa Grande Tour, 9-11:30am, meet at VCHT, \$35

**THURS, MAR 24,** Bird Walk, 7:30-10am, meet at VCHT, \$20

Andy Ramos and his wife, Angelica Ballesteros Gomez, would like to extend their sincere thanks to the full and part-time community of Vieques for their constant support and prayers as Andy battles cancer in New York City. He misses Vieques terribly and can't wait to be home – healthy – later in 2016. Please keep him in your prayers. If you wish to contribute financially, please donate to his medical fund at [www.gofundme.com/z5qpvgc](http://www.gofundme.com/z5qpvgc).



**SBG**

**H. Marcano**

787.433.2024  
787.439.0638



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Vieques has never sounded better! Listen to **Better Together (Unidos Mejor)**, stories about the natural, historical, educational and cultural happenings on the island.

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## SOUTH SHORE BEACHES

**SUNBAY** Accessible by the gated entrance off 997, Sunbay is a one mile stretch of beach. Sunbay has lifeguards and bathhouse. The entrance is 5 miles from Isabel II and 0.7 miles from Esperanza (the Malecon). There is a \$2 entrance fee.

**MEDIA LUNA** Enter the gated entrance off 997 at Sunbay. Follow the dirt road at the end of Sunbay and travel 0.6 more miles to Media Luna. Great for small children, Media Luna is shallow. You can walk 30 ft out into the water and still be in waist deep water. Also, for a free "spa experience," enjoy an exfoliation from the silky, fine sand.



**NAVIO** Follow directions to Media Luna but pass Media Luna and take a left at the sign and go another 0.3 miles. The road is extremely rough and 4wd is required but you can also park at Media Luna and walk

to Navío. Go into the cave on the left side of the beach (if facing the water) for an excellent photo spot! There's good surf so bring your boogie board!

**ESPERANZA BEACH** To the east and west of the fishing piers in Esperanza.

**PLAYA GRANDE** Leave Esperanza on 996 going west and come to a T (rt. 201). Take a left. Go 1 mile to where the road dead ends and take a left. Follow road to the bottom of the hill. Take a right onto dirt road to find a beach spot. Great beach for walking. Playa Grande is a turtle nesting beach so be sure to keep dogs on a leash and watch out for roped off nests.

**PLAYA NEGRA (BLACK SAND BEACH)** Leave Esperanza on 996 going west. Come to T [201] and take left. Drive 0.1 mile and there will be a guard rail and small pull off on your left. Park here. [It is easier to turn around if you drive 100 feet more to Gallery Galleon and turn around in drive just past entrance to Gallery.] Walk down the path to the dried stream bed and follow to the right. It is about a 20 minute walk to the beach. If it has rained, stream bed will actually be a small stream. Bring bug spray and water.

## BEACHES ON THE VIEQUES FISH AND WILDLIFE REFUGE\*

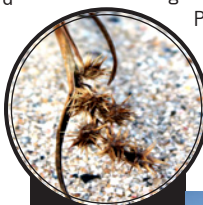
For reference, Sol Food is parked right in front of the entrance to the FWS Refuge

**CARACAS\*** From 997, turn into the FWS Refuge at the Sol Food truck. Go aprox 2 miles to a sign for Caracas. Turn right and go aprox 1.5 more miles. No shade except for picnic gazebos in the grass area. Watch out for the sandburs! (see below). Be very careful where you step when you are in the grassy area and kids should wear their shoes down to the sand (or water's edge).

*Note: Only park in the parking lot, and not in the cul-de-sac at the very end, to avoid fines.*



**PLAYUELA\*** From 997, turn into the FWS Refuge at the Sol Food truck. Go aprox 2 miles to the brown sign for Caracas. Turn right and go aprox 1 mile to brown sign for Playuela and Tres Palmitas. Turn right and drive 2 minutes to the sign and take the walking path to the left to get to the beach. A short walk and you're there!



**Watch out!** for the Coast Sandbur - very prevalent at Caracas and Pata Prieta and painful to step on.





**PATA PRIETA\*** From 997, turn into the FWS Refuge at the Sol Food truck and go aprox 2 miles. Pass turn to Caracas and continue straight on dirt road for aprox 1 mile and turn right at Pata Prieta sign. After 0.2 miles, follow the road to the right to a small parking area with sign. Walk down the (slippery) gravel path to the left of the sign to the beach. Rough road so 4wd is recommended. Bring a beach umbrella as there is little shade!

**LA CHIVA\*** From 997, turn into the FWS Refuge at the Sol Food truck and go aprox 2 miles to the end of the paved road. Pass the sign for Caracas and continue straight on the dirt road. La Chiva has numbered spots #1-21. At marker #15 the road splits so stay right if you want to explore La Chiva spots #16-21.

**LA PLATA\*** Follow directions to La Chiva but when road splits take left and go 0.5 miles to reach La Plata.

## NORTH SHORE BEACHES

**SEA GLASS BEACH** Drive into Isabel II on 200 and make a left onto main street (Calle Muñoz Rivera). Almost at the end of the street you will see an intersection with a church on your right. Make a left here and at the next intersection make a right. Park on the street (not in the yellow!) and walk to the left of the gazebo down a path to the beach.

**LA CHATA** Drive by the ferry on your left and go up the steep hill to the right of El Yaté Bar. Go by the lighthouse on your left and take the next right down a steep little hill. Curve to your left and follow along this shoreline road. Pass La Lanchita on left and drive approximately 0.35 miles to a left turn onto a small dirt drive with two palms and large rocks at the end. La Chata! Keep your eyes open for sea glass. Don't be surprised if you are swimming with horses! Many people come here to exercise them.



**EL GALLITO** Pass the W on 200 going west and look for a parking area and short peninsula on your right. The beach is on the right. Great place to be at sunset! Excellent photo spot!

**EL PARQUE CEIBA** Go west on 201 approximately 1 mile past the airport and follow the sharp curve to the right. Go down a small hill and the Ceiba tree is on your right. Enjoy the Ceiba tree without climbing, marking or damaging the roots.

**ROMPEOLAS** Follow directions to the Ceiba tree but pass the Ceiba and continue on the main road to the left. Take the next right at the empty concrete structure with parking lot and this road will take you to the pier. Rompeolas pier is 1 mile long so it is great for beginning joggers or walkers! Great snorkeling on the left side of the pier.



**BLAYDIN BEACH OR MOSQUITO BEACH** Follow directions to the pier but right before going out onto the pier there is a small sandy road to the left that leads to a shallow beach. There are lots of starfish here so be very careful where you step!

**PUNTA ARENAS** Follow directions to Rompeolas but go past turn for pier and drive approximately 2 miles. You will come to a sign that says you are entering FWS Refuge. Drive 1 mile and come to a T / there are spots to the left and to the right with the best snorkeling to your left. Much of Punta Arenas has eroded away so, in many places, there is not a beach to sit on until further down on the right. No-see-ums tend to come out in the afternoon so make it a morning excursion and bring your bug spray!



**BUNKERS** To see the hidden Navy bunkers follow directions to Rompeolas but keep straight past the turn for pier. Drive 2 miles and take the second paved road to the left. This road is a short loop that will bring you back to the same road.

★ IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THEM ALL, THESE ARE INSIDER FAVORITES!



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