

Three V.I. beaches earn top spots in Travel + Leisure

By ALDETH LEWIN
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Three Virgin Islands beaches ranked high on a new survey published this month in Travel + Leisure magazine.

The January issue includes a "Best Beaches" survey that highlights Turtle Beach on St. Croix's Buck Island; Trunk Bay on St. John; and Magens Bay on St. Thomas.

"It's no secret that St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas are home to some of the world's best beaches," Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty said in a written statement.

"This endorsement by one of the world's leading travel publications reconfirms the attraction of our beaches and its importance to the territory's tourism industry. Paired with the Foundation of Environmental Education Blue Flag certification of seven USVI beaches and marinas, we can also boast some of the most pristine and ecologically sustainable waters



for visitors and residents to enjoy."

Blue Flag is an eco-label awarded to beaches and marinas worldwide that meet the established standards of the program. The Blue Flag certification is based on compliance with 32 criteria including environmental education and information, water quality, environmental management and safety and services.

The Travel + Leisure magazine survey ranked the three V.I. beaches in different categories.

Turtle Beach on St. Croix's Buck Island ranked fourth for seclusion.

St. John's Trunk Bay placed second in the "Best Wildlife Viewing"

category, chosen for its underwater snorkeling trail that brings visitors face-to-face with an abundance of marine wildlife as well as for the surrounding 7,000 acres of protected National Park with hiking trails through forests, mangroves and other tropical ecosystems.

The calm waters of St. Thomas' Magens Bay rounded out the top five in the family friendly beach category, noted as a welcoming locale for swimming and other water sports for all ages.

Travel + Leisure used an online survey to poll readers on their favorite beach destinations. Respondents were asked to rate their favorites of 54 beaches chosen by the magazine's editors in a selection of categories: seclusion, activities, dramatic landscapes, families, people-watching and wildlife viewing.

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Daily News File Photos
Trunk Bay on St. John placed second in Travel + Leisure's "Best Wildlife Viewing" category.



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