

David Johnson

on what makes the British Virgin Islands so special...

...their phenomenal **physical beauty**, safe cruising waters, **protected anchorages**, amazing **snorkelling**, the abundance of **untouched green space**, the tarpon behind **your boat** at night, and the **flamingos and iguanas**

Anegada, the most northerly of the British Virgin Islands is distinctive for its flat topography and coral and limestone composition, which is quite different from the hilly, volcanic nature of the other islands (right); David Johnson on board his yacht *Resolute* (opposite page)



WORDS: David Johnson
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The British Virgin Islands have provided yachts with many safe harbours since the days of Sir Francis Drake and the pirates of old

What is so special about the British Virgin Islands? I think it's their phenomenal physical beauty, safe cruising waters and protected areas, the financial stability of the BVI government and the wonderful island people. Then there are the protected anchorages, amazing snorkelling, the abundance of untouched green space, the tarpon behind your boat at night, and the flamingos and iguanas...
The BVIs have provided yachts with many safe harbours since the days of Sir Francis Drake

and the pirates of old. Today, the same harbours provide great day sailing, scuba-diving, kite-boarding and windsurfing.
My favourite island is undoubtedly Virgin Gorda, specifically North Sound, with other favourite anchorages including White Bay and The Bight. All provide natural beauty, beautiful blue water and exciting snorkelling. I also enjoy tender exploration of The Baths and Oil Nut Bay.
What else do I love to do in these beautiful islands? The list is endless... cruising the waters

Deadman's Beach on the stunning Peter Island Resort (above); Right: landscaping at the Oil Nut Bay resort, where David likes to indulge his passion for horse riding; and checking on progress at the YCCS Virgin Gorda construction site





Oil Nut Bay resort, where the Johnson family enjoy hiking, horseriding and snorkelling (opposite page); directly across the Sir Francis Drake Channel from Road Town, Peter Island is the home of the luxurious Peter Island Resort (left)

in the company of friends and family, riding my horse at Oil Nut Bay, snorkelling The Indians and diving.

Reefs, wrecks, rock pinnacles, caverns and walls in the BVI make snorkelling and diving so exciting. There are more than 50 islands and 70 sites to explore, with Dive BVI offering excellent diving, snorkelling and day trip options to wrecks such as the wreck of the *Rhone*, which was driven into the coral more than a century ago.

There is also world-class blue marlin fishing at Virgin Gorda's Sound Drop. Other deep-sea, inshore, reef and fly-fishing can be done around the vast reefs of Anegada, Colquhoun Reef and Eustatia Reef. The fact that undersea canyons 'drop' off the plateau undergirding the British Virgin Islands makes catching other game fish such as wahoo, white marlin, sailfish, yellowfin, blackfin tuna and kingfish great sport.

There really is something to do for all the family

in the BVI. Pam loves the peace and privacy of the islands, as well as 'the horses at Biras Creek Resort, the people of the BVI, Biras Creek and Oil Nut Bay's hiking trails'. Samara is a fan of 'the many water adventures, such as windsurfing and paddle-boarding, practising my photography, bringing friends around and soaking up the sun'.

We all love the food in the BVI. Favourites are fly fish sandwiches from Fat Virgin's Café, pizza from Oil Nut Bay's Beach Club – and, of course, our new ice-cream machine! We also enjoy eating at the Biras Creek Restaurant, Saba Rock, Leverick Bay or the Rock Café. And, for cocktails, there is no better place than under the palapa of the Oil Nut Bay Beach Club bathed in the pink light of sunset.

So what would be the ideal five-day itinerary for cruising the BVI? For day one, my suggestion is Virgin Gorda: anchor in North Sound; make memories at Oil Nut Bay; enjoy a number of snorkelling sites; dine at Biras Creek Restaurant (formal), Saba Rock or Fat

DAVID JOHNSON'S SUGGESTED FIVE-DAY ITINERARY IN THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

DAY 1

- Virgin Gorda:
- | Anchor in North Sound
- | Make memories at Oil Nut Bay
- | Enjoy a number of snorkelling sites
- | Dine at Biras Creek Restaurant
- | Saba Rock and Fat Virgin's Café are great casual dining spots
- | Jumbies on Friday night

DAY 2

- Norman Island:
- | Snorkelling The Indians
- | Snorkelling The Caves
- | Drinks and conch fritters at Willie T's
- | Dinner at Pirates Restaurant

DAY 3

- Peter Island:
- | Quiet anchorage in Great Harbour
- | Explore Peter Island Resort
- | Tender to the Dead Chest
- | Tender round to White Bay Beach

DAY 4

- Jost Van Dyke:
- | Anchor in Great Harbour or White Bay
- | Enjoy the lovely beaches
- | Sample the great nightlife at Foxy's

OR...

- Anegada:
- | Start by snorkelling at The Baths
- | Travel up to Anegada
- | Anchor off Setting Point
- | Enjoy touring and snorkelling the island
- | Finish with a lobster lunch

DAY 5

- Worth spending another day!
- Virgin Gorda:
- | Tie up at YCCS Virgin Gorda Marina
- | Enjoy Oil Nut Bay
- | Visit the various snorkelling sites
- | Have dinner at Biras Creek Restaurant, Saba Rock or Fat Virgin's Café
- | If it's a Friday night, head over to Jumbies



YCCS
VIRGIN GORDA



Virgin Gorda is the idyllic location for the new Yacht Club Costa Smeralda (YCCS), developed by David Johnson's company Victor International Corporation. The elegant but intimate clubhouse is complemented by a state-of-the-art marina with total dockage of 762 metres (2,500 feet), capable of accommodating yachts up to 100 metres (328 feet) in size, thus providing an ideal base for cruising the Virgin Islands. The club and marina, which will be linked to the Oil Nut Bay Resort Community and Beach Club as well as Biras Creek Resort, hosted the inaugural Caribbean Superyacht Regatta & Rendezvous in March, co-organised by Boat International Media. This will be followed by the Transatlantic Superyacht Regatta, which begins in Tenerife in late November 2011 and finishes in the BVI during the first two weeks of December.

Virgin's Café (casual); and visit Jumbie's Beach Bar & Grill if you happen to be there on a Friday night.

Day two would be spent at Norman Island, snorkelling at The Indians and The Caves, enjoying drinks and conch fritters at Willie T's, and dining at Pirates Restaurant.

Peter Island would be my choice for day three, choosing the quiet anchorage of Great Harbour. From there, explore Peter Island Resort, then tender to the Dead Chest and round to White Bay Beach.

Head to Jost Van Dyke on day four, anchoring in Great Harbour or White Bay in order to enjoy the lovely beaches and the great nightlife at Foxy's. Alternatively, start day four by snorkelling at The Baths before

travelling up to Anegada. Anchor off Setting Point, enjoy touring and snorkelling, and finish with a lobster lunch.

Day five has to be back at Virgin Gorda. Tie up at YCCS Virgin Gorda Marina, enjoy Oil Nut Bay and the various snorkelling sites, dine at Biras Creek Restaurant, Saba Rock or Fat Virgin's Café, and visit Jumbies on Friday night.

Part of the beauty of the BVIs is the privacy they afford by only being accessible by boat, helicopter or seaplane. When flying in by private jet, I opt for the Dassault Falcon or the Hawker.

However you choose to get there, I can assure you of one thing – you will be choosing the best destination in the Caribbean! **bb**