

NORMAN ISLAND LEASED TO VINCI FOUNDATION

BRUCE POTTER
Island Resources Foundation

Norman Island - deemed by many as Stevenson's "Treasure Island" - has been leased, in its entirety, to the Virgin Islands Nature Conservation Institute (VINCI), a foundation established for the conservation of native flora, fauna, and marine life, the restoration of local ecology, and the promotion of education and research furthering the conservation of nature.

In 1750, a pirate by the name of Owen Lloyd allegedly buried some treasure on Norman Island. In fact a large amount of gold and silver was found by the Acting Lieutenant Governor of Tortola, Abraham Chalwill on the island after the pirate and his retinue had been killed by the Spaniards.

VINCI's immediate plans for the island include removal of livestock (primarily goats) to accommodate reforestation with native trees and revegetation of native ground cover and shrubs.

Further development plans include building a small natural history museum, with both public exhibits and a research facility, and planting a botanical garden highlighting the rich and diverse native flora of the Virgin Islands. All construction will be on the "design with nature" principle utilizing up-to-date environmentally sensitive materials and technologies.

In addition to the museum, new construction clustered near the existing beach bar restaurant (Billy Bones) will include amenities aimed at eco-tourism. There will also be some historical restoration of island ruins. Trails and signs designed to generate understanding of ecology, wildlife, and geology will be developed. A dock will be constructed far south of the current beach. Plans will be made to make the Island and museum accessible to school children and

college students.

The Island Sun has learnt that in its initial stages, the VINCI project on Norman Island will be directed by Dr. James (Skip) Lazell of the Conservation Agency. Dr. Lazell has worked on conservation in the BVI continuously since 1980 and is known internationally for his direction of scientific activities at Guana Island, to which he brought hundreds of scientists over the past twenty years.

Norman Island has a rich history and an enormous potential for environmental restoration. The VINCI Foundation told this newspaper that the project ensures a secure environmental future for the island.

Asked what will happen to Billy Bones Restaurant and Beach Bar, a Vinci spokesperson said that Billy Bones Restaurant and Beach Bar is an attraction that benefits eco-tourism. It is leased to its present managers, Valerie and David Sims, who themselves have a substantial commitment to the island's environmental future. It is anticipated that the restaurant and bar will continue to prosper.

This newspaper also asked, how will the goats be removed? VINCI will ask the goats' owners to remove them in a reasonable period of time. If they are not removed, VINCI will encourage others to come and remove them.

According to the Foundation, the museum will be located on the knoll south of the beach and Billy Bones Restaurant and Beach Bar. Norman Island is owned by Audubon Holdings, Ltd., which is directed by a group of BVI residents and Belongers, including the Jarecki family of Guana Island.

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