

PRIDEJA

MAGAZINE

HER LEGACY MARCH 9TH

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#HerLegacy

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm pleased to say that over the last few months, our team and brand has grown beyond our wildest dreams! What joy it brings to me when I receive impactful words of encouragement from our readers both in Jamaica and the Diaspora and to know that our magazine is truly making a difference in and for our community.

With that being said, welcome to issue two of PrideJa Magazine; providing a 360 authentic experience of Jamaican lifestyle, entrepreneurship, food and entertainment. Expect with every issue, breathtaking experiences filled with stunning photos and informative articles and reviews.

Enjoy the mouth-watering restaurant review, our destination highlight, the flip side of mental health and how our young creative entrepreneurs are building Jamaica with a dash of social sitings.

PrideJa Magazine is very active in the Social Media of today, on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. But our original print version of the magazine will still be a strong and powerful media tool as well.

Until next time, see you in print and on the web!



EL•ES EYEWEAR

A DEEPER SENSE OF STYLE

INSIDER LOOK

EL•ES Eyewear is a personal boutique service which visits clients in the comfort of their home or office.

PRIDEMAG: What made you decide to start EL•ES?

A. I grew up in the eye-care industry and from a very young age I was aware that my glasses didn't seem to reflect my personality. I approached my Mum about the frames in her store (and how boring I thought they were) and she

allowed me to help with the selection process. Of course I chose more funky pieces, these were on display in her store on my own little shelf labelled "La-Vonne's Selections" (my middle name is La-Vonne). Quite a few of her customers appreciated this selection, and so the business began to grow. In 2010, I decided to begin the process of making "La-Vonne's Selections" it's own business and rebranded to "EL•ES Eyewear".

LaVonne Eyewear

Models wearing selected pieces from LaVonne. EL•ES Eyewear hand-selects frames from inspiring designers around the world including the United States, Canada, France and Germany

PRIDEMAG: We know you have a background in architecture does that influence or shape how you see design?

A. So first let me clarify: EL•ES Eyewear carries many artistically crafted brands from artisans around the world, including my personal line, 'La-vonne'. The line was a gift from

my father when I was 15 years old. He found this company in Germany that hand-crafted exquisite pieces and I got the opportunity to co-design with them. I actually started designing the line before doing my degree, I've always had an eye for design and wanting to find the perfect marriage between aesthetic and function.

FASHION

We sat down with Founder of EL-ES Eyewear to get the low down on this brand that celebrates standing out in style.



CHERESE LAVONNE RICKETTS
C.E.O of EL•ES Eyewear and creator of LaVonne Eyewear



“The tagline for my business is, a deeper sense of style.”

PRIDEMAG: To you, what sets your glasses apart from other eyewear?

A. The tagline for my business is “a deeper sense of style”. I source frames specifically to fit one of 5 frame personalities that I have identified among my clients: the Funky Free-Spi-

rit, Natural Nerd, Elegant Ego-tist, Subtle Sweetheart or Dramatic Diva. The tagline for my personal brand, Lavonne, is “ordinary is overrated”. And it truly is. Lavonne eyewear challenges current fashion trends by introducing asymmetry, texture, loud colours and patterns, and unique shapes.

PRIDEMAG: Your eyewear is known for its striking frames. How do you source and treat with your material to get them to do what they do?

A. Lavonne eyewear is currently produced in Germany.

It's no secret that Germans are known for their attention to detail and exquisite engineering. The frames are made by layering acetate to make long patterned sheets, the frame shapes are then machine-cut. Attendants groove and smooth the frames by hand and add final details. For our recently launched Sunwear line, the lenses are made in my family's lab here in Kingston and I directly oversee that process. I get to choose tint colours and finishes for the lenses and even dip-dye some of the lenses myself.

PRIDEMAG: Who or what was your inspiration for the optical line?

A. My dad. I had no intention of starting a line. It's amazing how parents can see and unearth parts of you that you

may not have even been aware of. By gifting me with the line, my Dad really lit a passion inside of me for which I'm beyond grateful.

PRIDEMAG: Do you design with a particular person or era in mind?

A. My glasses are for the funky free-spirited individual who has no particular desire to fit

“My glasses are for the funky free-spirited individual.”

in and every desire to stand out. They aren't afraid to be bold in their expression of self.



PRIDEMAG: Finally, do you wear glasses?

A. LOL. I do! And I love it. I have three pairs filled with my prescription and 2 pairs of sun wear. I definitely prefer wearing glasses frames to contacts because I find it weird to have something IN my eye.



THE ART OF HEALTH



Nestled in the cool hills of Mandeville, just outside the town centre, is a business that has made it their mission to ensure people have easy access to a healthy lifestyle.

Nestled in the cool hills of Mandeville, just outside the town centre, is a business that has made it their mission to ensure people have easy access to a healthy lifestyle. The Fruits Gallery is the brainchild of Alphanso “Roger” Foster and has been in business for the past two and a half years.

Over this time the gallery has grown in leaps and bounds, adding not only more varieties of fruits, but products such as shakes, smoothies, dairy-free pastries and ice cream to their offerings.

The gallery is a mostly glass building that sits on a huge parking lot, a delightful guarantee to the many customers that parking is never an issue. Step inside and your eyes will first be drawn to the tiled mural of the fruits gallery logo beneath your feet, then to the extensive selection of fresh fruits which extends across the counter. If that didn't get your fruit groove going, look to your left and your right and you will see shelves of fresh citrus, kiwi, soursop and

“The possibilities are endless - as are the choices at the Fruits Gallery.”

a number of fruits gallery branded products, such as almonds, flax seeds, sunflower seeds and the like.

After taking in this vibrant view you're faced with a multitude of choices; do you order a smoothie with only your favourite fruits? Do you get a specially blended power punch? Do you order the fruits gallery popular green juice or do you buy a pastry and enjoy a refreshing cup of coconut water? The possibilities are endless - as are the choices at the Fruits Gallery.



Roger, in explaining his plans for expansion for the Fruits Gallery said that “the plans for the gallery’s expansion are beyond anyone’s imagination” adding that in the same way that they have expanded from fruit sales into more health-based products, the next step will be into cosmetics and essential oils.

Asked what people can expect in the future he added “you can look forward to seeing fruits gallery all over the place in the next couple of years.”

The Fruits Gallery is located on Caledonia Road in Mandeville and is Open from 8:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.



A DEEPER LOOK AT MENTAL HEALTH

BRIAN ALLWOOD'S STORY

The first time I tried to kill myself, I was 15. I lunged through a window in my 5th form classroom and was pulled back by some of my classmates—who subsequently made much fun of the whole debacle. A few weeks later I tried clumsily to swallow a bunch of tablets—Excedrin Extra Strength to be precise. I had a massive stomach ache afterwards, but death was (sadly) nowhere close.

My teenage years were, in fact, a spate of suicide attempts and anxiety attacks. I confided in a friend of mine, whose mother contacted mine. In a fit of rage, my mother burst into my room and declared: “If yuh ever kill yourself, jancrow woulda nyam yuh body. If yuh tink mi woulda gi yuh a funeral, yuh mek a sad mistake.” Without a doubt my mother thought I was being a dramatic teenager in the throes of puberty who was merely acting out because something didn’t go my way.

That quip from my mother has always stuck with me—a lesson that she wasn’t one to go to when my head was all dark. I had my first nervous breakdown at 19 in the middle of what was then the biggest project of my professional life. It led to me being homeless for four days and were it not for the fact that the project came attached with a hotel room, I

would have had nowhere to sleep for those four days. I moved in with one of my ‘uptown’ friends and lived with her family for nine months. Another ‘uptown’ friend encouraged me to seek therapy. LOL—WHAT? Gyal somn dat. Rich people somn dat.

But I was in a dark place, a place where the concept of time changes. A place where there are no days or weeks; only a sharp silence and a everlasting darkness. A place that absolutely breaks one down, strips one bare. A paradoxical limbo; a

“My teenage years were, in fact, a spate of suicide attempts.”

place of possibilities and sharp realities, of fact and fantasy. A place where one’s “purpose” is annihilated. A place where idealists are raped, a place where hope is replaced with a very sorry kind of wisdom. It is a place where the thought of taking your own life is completely rational. It is a place where you can regret

not taking your own life before, a place where you hate the fact that you were even born. It is a place where there is no hope, a place where it physically hurts to even be awake. It's a place where you stay... unless you get help.

Eventually I got help. I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety disorders, placed on anti-depressants and had weekly psychotherapy sessions. They helped, and I thought I was better. At the time I believed this was not only a temporary thing, but also that I had better things to do with my time and money. I was wrong.

Since I decided I was better and stopped my treatments my adult life has become reminiscent of my teenage years. I found myself having anxiety attacks regularly, isolating myself, deleting people and things I enjoyed from my life. Most of all, I have not dealt with several large issues—from death to family—in any real way. The cup finally ran over, again, three weeks ago. I broke down; but this time instead of being homeless I was institutionalized at the Humber River Regional Hospital, Keele Site. There, a lovely nurse named Madge (well, not only her) helped me come to grips with the fact that my 'issues' are not just 'issues'. Depression and anxiety disorders are mental illnesses that require treatment (please note I did not say medication or consulting a pastor who is not appropriately trained).

I am mentally ill. Wow. It doesn't make sense... but yet it does.

I have seriously tried to take my own life over sixteen times. I have thought about it an incalculable amount of times. Even more alarming, I have regretted not doing it too many times. I wear a sweater, no matter the temperature, because I am always anxious and fearful that people will touch me. I wear my 'resting asshole face' 24/7 to avoid anyone I don't know asking me questions or thinking I'm friendly because I am literally scared to death of interacting with people, doing something wrong, saying something wrong. It's why if there's one person at the table I don't know, you won't be hearing from me all night.

Accepting that I am mentally ill is something my family and friends are struggling with. I forced my mother to say it out loud and she stuttered before breaking

“Eventually I got help. I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety disorders.”



down in tears. I explained to her that while her behaviour toward me during my childhood might have made my depression worse—it wasn't really her fault. I understand, now, that my mother and most Jamaicans are of the 'help-yourself-nuttin-nuh-wrong-wid-yuh' ilk. This was a foreign thing for her and best dealt with through some concept of tough love.

It is instructive to note that all the black people on the ward with me were of Jamaican descent. One woman repeatedly came up to me saying “Hi daddy, mi a di ugliest bitch alive don't it?” throughout my entire stay.

We must begin to 'de-brown' mental illness in Jamaica. Ironically, mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety are more likely to occur in people who are poor(er?) and more disadvantaged in society. At some point we have to question why all the mental illness events and walks and days are seemingly supported by the same kind of people—'brown' and 'uptown'. Why it is that the conversation about mental illness happens solely in the Golden Triangle. Why it is that the cost for getting help for mental illness is so high. Why it is that there are no support systems in

primary and secondary schools to help students deal with the ever-increasing pressure of an archaic exam-centric educational system with a multiplicity of other problems that have a severe impact on them.

Depression is much different from 'feeling sad' or 'being down'. It is a terrible mental illness—and I want you to read that sentence out loud. People who experience depression deal with severe negative feelings and thoughts that become their general routine. This despair affects every aspect of their lives. Those who are so depressed to consider suicide never do so thinking 'this is the easy way out'; we do so thinking this is the ONLY way out.

Taking your own life is not a trivial matter. It is something that people usually think about for some time before making an attempt. In my own case, when I tried to hang myself from the pull up bar in my room five weeks ago, I thought not of myself but of my friends and family. I thought that I would be doing them a favour by leaving them with a memory of a good friend, and not

having them deal with the dark horrible person I thought I had become. I felt like I hit a wall in my personal life with financial and school troubles, and I was absolutely tired of being a burden on the universe. For me it was a selfless thought, a heroic act and even though I am being treated now for my depression, I still regret having been too tall for the noose to do its job.

This is not a call for the government; it is a call for us all to seriously look at our attitudes towards mental illness. How we support our children, siblings, parents, friends and colleagues who are affected by the gamut of mental ailments. It is about us, as a people, being more open to the idea that sometimes we actually do need help and that 'help' is not always a case of cultural imperialism or 'uptown'. It is an open call, for anyone who want to be a better human being, to understand that people who struggle with mental illness need support and love. It is an open call to read just a little literature on mental illnesses and find out how you might be affected by it (either in your own life or that of a friend).

Brandon Allwood is a student at York University in Toronto. He is a recipient of the Prime Minister's National Award for Excellence in Journalism, The City of Toronto Award for Excellence in Community Development, a writer and serial procrastinator. He is mentally ill and lives with chronic depression and anxiety disorders. You can tweet/follow him at @brandonallwood.



FOOD

CRYSTAL EDGE RESTAURANT

THE GEM OF IRISH TOWN

Snuggled in the verdant hills of Irish Town, St. Andrew is the town's best kept secret. About a minute into the picturesque little village, you will find the eatery owned by the remarkable Winsome Hall, affectionately known as "Miss Winsome".

As soon as you enter the door, you are greeted by a smile that will help to set the tone for the rest of your dining experience.

Like the name suggests, Crystal Edge restaurant sits on the hillside. While you partake of your meal or meals of choice you can also take in the sights of the luscious trees and the not so far in the distance hilly terrain of the Blue Mountain range. The menu carries an assortment of dishes including, but not limited to red peas Soup, roast pork and jerked chicken. The lively owner got her inspiration for the restaurant when she managed a jerk chicken and pork pit at the very same spot back in the early 90s, however inclement weather conditions would disturb her business.



Not only does the restaurant have a scenic location and mouth-watering meals, but it is also home of the 2012 and 2013 Jamaica Observer Food Awards for the "Best Sunday Spot". This one-of-a-kind place of 15 years has proven its value and you can trust that you will not regret the trip up the mountain for a mouthful of delectable oxtail, rice and peas with a side of fried plantains.



DESTINATION

LUNA SEA INN

If you are ever looking to escape for private, intimate and inexpensive getaway here's a secret. Luna Sea Inn is the perfect location.

I visited the property for the first time earlier in 2016 along with my girlfriend on one of our many bag-packing experiences. We wanted to make some fun memories so we decided to take a coaster bus from downtown to Westmoreland, (I had no idea what I was getting into). After one of the longest drives I had in a while, the driver stopped and pointed to this little hotel. At first glance I was skeptical but we entered the lobby area. I remember hearing the ocean and feeling a rush of fresh breeze across my face, completely shifting my energy. Luna Sea Inn is tucked away in beautiful Bluefields Westmoreland, the boutique hotel boast a total of ten spacious rooms with wifi and cable, an open dining area, a pool, bar and a stunning gazebo to capture the beautiful ocean view and sunsets. Dr Linda Chidester, the property owner is a charming, eccentric woman who is always ready to have a casual chat with guests, allowing them to feel comfortable and like family.

The courtyard, with four rooms opening directly onto it, is a great place to chill and fall in love with Jamaica a new. With a large outdoor TV it is perfect to catch up on your favourite shows or the local news and entertainment. For family gathering, a birthday party, or even a small wedding reception this area is also perfect. If you are feeling a bit hungry, you'll be in for more than a treat! The restau-

rant offerers a variety international with the right amount of Jamaican in it. The ackee and sailfish with ripe plantains and fried dumplins is nothing like you've have before. It transports you to grandma's cooking back in the day. All of this is seaside so you never have to leave the ocean or change from your swimsuit. Just throw on a t-shirt or cover up and you're just perfect.

The biggest surprise from was the polite and accommodating staff. I was a bit hesitant as i visited the property with my girlfriend and wasn't sure if we would experience the whispers and awkward eye contacts. They were very welcoming and ready to host the diverse guests that we witnessed throughout our three day stay. The private location of the property allows you to bask in this 'private island' experience, which was very different from the typical all inclusive treatment one would experience from brand name hotels in Jamaica. I enjoyed spending quality time doing absolutely nothing but being cuddled by the sound of the waves and the tranquility of the property.

If you are a fan of souvenirs the Little Shop of Luna Sea in the lobby will suite you with an unique selection of local goods. Offering a wide range of Jamaican made products, is two spacious cabinets full of unique handpicked offerings.



Dr Chidester explained the partnership the hotel has the community and that they are committed to supporting artists all around Jamaica. Throughout the hotel one can find beautiful handcrafted calabash, wooden carvings, paintings and jewelry among other craft items that are sure to catch your attention. She also explained that 25% of the proceeds from purchases in the gift shop will be channeled back into their community partnerships. Tours can also be arranged to meet with artists in the immediate community. Local artists, Jah Calo of Studio Black and Gerry McDonald have galleries just a short distance from the property that you can make a date night of.

Luna Sea Inn is absolutely perfect! I would be there every month if my schedule allowed it. If you are looking to get your groove back or just rekindling that missing flame, it is definitely the spot.



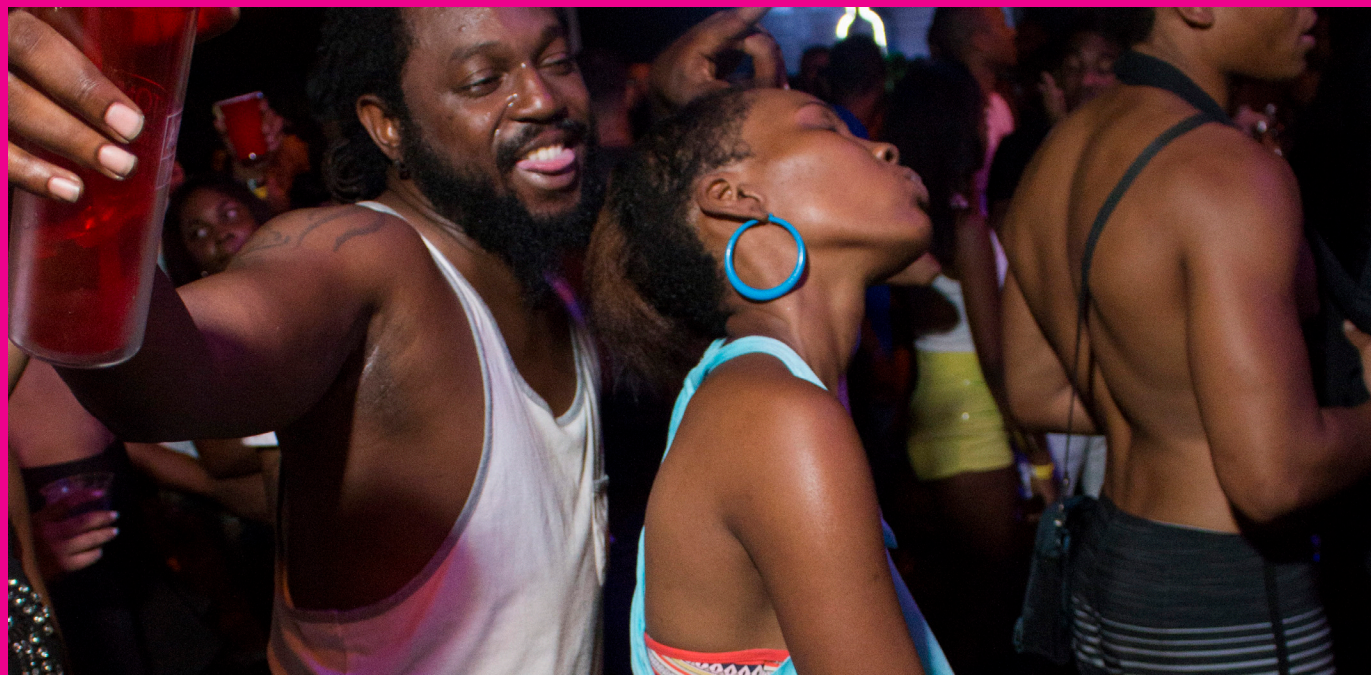
“Luna Sea Inn is perfect! I would be there every month if my schedule allowed it.”



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF TOLERANCE



I LOVE SOCCA



INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEAN-UP



LUST





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