

The Good Life IRL

From YouTubers to bloggers, TikTok stars to Instagram influencers, Caribbean content creators are drawing from their island roots, sharing their talents while cultivating a loyal online following from around the world.

WRITER REBECCA HUGH PHOTOGRAPHY VARIOUS



They are unique storytellers, giving viewers serious FOMO (fear of missing out). But at their best, they also provide meaningful encouragement for their audience to enrich their own lives with new adventures in food, fashion, art and culture.

This inspiration can sometimes get lost among the flood of likes, comments, mentions and shares, as we consume content at an ever increasing rate. But, for these three Caribbean influencers, their love for what they do never runs dry. So we stopped the endless scroll to take a closer look at these talented voices. They shared what drives their creativity, and how they hope their work empowers others to live in style.



Peter Thomas, @BwoyPedro

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF PETER THOMAS | @BWOYPEDRO

"I really wanted to build out my skill set in photo manipulation, but when COVID-19 hit, I started creating travel videos. And then I found myself loving the whole travel idea," said Peter Thomas, Jamaican-based graphic designer turned photographer, cinematographer and lifestyle content creator. Sharing his artistry and technical advice on Instagram, he inspires a loyal audience of filmmakers, photographers and fellow aficionados.

The camera opens a gateway into Thomas's imaginative mind, taking followers on a colorful journey around the Caribbean and the world through his dreamlike travel photographs and films. His cinematic shots of nature are particularly breathtaking, immersed in lush forests and deep blue seas. "My work is about living life in colors, seeing the world through my eyes," he explains.

These newfound talents have exposed Thomas to travel op-

portunities and cross-border projects, like directing and filming a video for the Barbados Tourist Board. Along the way, he always shares his creative process with his followers, reviewing various camera lenses, rigs and microphones that may improve the quality of their work. This has led to collaborations with professional equipment brands like SmallRig, Nitze and FeiyuTech.

Despite his rapid success, Thomas always keeps the spirit of learning top of mind. "I am not where I want to be," he confesses. "There is so much more to explore in this world, and I want to show the world and my followers that it's a beautiful place." He hopes the people he inspires live by this example and set out for what truly makes them happy. For Thomas, life is not one straight path, but a labyrinth worth traversing. "I never went into content creation as a travel influencer, but I'm doing that now, and I never saw myself as an influencer, but I am doing that now," he reflects. "This is what I've learned. Never give up and keep trying new things. Because life always changes."



Jeanmeil Nestor, @ohgvibe

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF JEANMEIL NESTOR | @OHGVIBE

Confidence is all about feeling good in your skin – literally so for influencer Jeanmeil Nestor. On his platforms on Tiktok, Youtube and Instagram @ohgvibe, skincare is central to his overall content exploring wellness and style. “Skincare is extremely important to me because it starts and ends my day,” says the St. Lucian native. “No matter how the middle of my day goes, at least I can cater to myself in the morning and at night. Also, I want to look the best at my class reunion,” he laughs.

And who doesn’t? Nestor doles out his skincare wisdom through his witty videos and posts, from product reviews to regimen advice. Since building his platform, he has worked with major international skincare brands like Naturium, The INKEY List, Bubble Skincare, and PURE’AM Skincare, just to name a few. After working with these U.S. and Canadian brands, Nestor hopes to prove “the amazing work ethic, content and beauty that comes from the Caribbean,” he says.

One of his key messages emphasizes the importance of skincare for men and the idea that nourishing oneself should not be a gender-specific activity. “It is amazing to see how my content over the years has helped some of my more reserved male followers to be more expressive and self-caring and not afraid to dress and take care of their skin.”

Overall, he encourages his followers to be their best selves, embracing all life’s unique facets. Offline, he has many interests. At the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College in Castries he is a full-time chemistry lecturer, a profession that gives him unique insight into the effectiveness of skincare products. He also works for the island’s leading events company and carnival band Xuvo, all while chronicling his get-ready-with-me process for various fetes.

Through his multiple revenue streams and interests, he leads by example and proves anyone can have a plethora of passions. He says, “Being involved in culture and carnival, being a travel junkie, getting that degree you always dreamed of, being an entrepreneur or philanthropist or just looking your best are all possible. You can be whoever you want to be.”



Myriam Ocasio, @puertoricoeats

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF MYRIAM OCASIO | @PUERTORICOEATS

For 39-year-old attorney Myriam Ocasio, her popular Instagram account Puerto Rico Eats turned from a passionate hobby into a part-time job. She initially launched her platform because “I was always the go-to person for food recommendations in my immediate circle, since I am always on the lookout for new restaurants.” But Ocasio realized her message was bigger than a few recommendations. She wanted to showcase her country as a major culinary destination of the Caribbean. “I strongly believe that the best way to get to know the culture of a place is through its food, and Puerto Rico has some of the best food in the world,” says Ocasio.

Through Instagram, she displays Puerto Rico’s gastronomically diverse culture through her delectable food photography and restaurant video tours. Alongside writing a food truck guide for the popular food website, Eater, Ocasio has made several ap-



pearances on local radio shows, been interviewed on NPR and collaborated with brands like Porsche and Tito’s Vodka.

For those looking to delve deeper into Puerto Rico’s culinary scene, she excitedly recommends restaurants like La Pícará, an inventive eatery in Santurce – San Juan’s booming arts district. “If you love cocktails and amazing food, [La Pícará] is the place to be. Get the steak and order the local sausage risotto.” She also lauds spots like Estela. Located in the popular western beach town of Rincón, the restaurant focuses on “international flare [supported by] locally sourced products. Its seasonal menu will wow you every time. One of my favorite dishes is the Arroz con Pato.”

By showcasing food around her home country, she says, “I hope my followers see through my efforts, that when you dedicate yourself to something you are truly passionate about, great things will happen. I am not the protagonist of Puerto Rico Eats. That is why you will rarely see me. Rather, our food and our culture are. I hope this inspires others to pursue their passions, and in doing so, find a way to give back.”